

Revelation
Chapter 19:1-10
“A Marriage Made in Heaven”
All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Announcement:

Teaching: Our text this morning references three women. Well it actually only directly references two, but it gives us an indirect reference to one more and all three of them are very important to our understanding and to our self-identification.

The **first** of these women we've been looking at in the **previous two chapters** ... she's known as The Great Harlot or as she's more graphically known in most of the older Bible translations ... The Great Whore. And as you will remember from our studies in **chapters 17 and 18** ... the Great Whore is a title used for the unsaved. Those who've never accepted a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ.

Chapter 17 talks about a group of people that would fit under the title of an old skateboarding term ... “posers”. I don't know if that term is even used anymore, but it's the perfect description of the Hell-bound people of **chapter 17**.

When my son was in his teenage years, he was so into skateboarding that for his birthday ... we had a half pipe built in our back yard. And he and his skateboarding friends would often refer to other kids as “posers”. That meant that you would often see them with a skateboard, but you very seldom saw them riding them. They would just walk around with some skateboarding logo on their T-shirt and a skateboard, that always looked suspiciously new, under their arm.

Well the folks in **chapter 17** have done the same thing with Christianity. They've got the T-shirt and a Bible under their arm. They show up at church a few times each month, but they've never actually made a commitment to Jesus ... they've never actually met Him and fallen in love with Him and so they're not actually saved ... they're posers.

And that's a group that, I personally believe, will number in the hundreds of millions with an untold number of them coming from the good old United States with a concentration in this strip of land that we live in called The Bible Belt.

But that group only makes up half of The Great Whore ... the other half is described in **chapter 18** ... the unsaved who make no pretence. They're all about business and pleasure and are bold in their rejection of Christianity.

Both of these groups are collectively referred to as The Great Harlot and both groups are

equally lost and will face the same final damnation.

So ... the first woman ... is The Great Harlot.

The **Second** woman that scripture refers to, and gives us as a category, is titled The Wife of Jehovah. It's a title that you'll find used throughout the Old Testament ... the **Book of Hosea** using it repeatedly and it always refers to ... the Jewish nation.

The First Group is The Great Harlot or the unsaved. The second group is The Wife of Jehovah or the Jewish nation and the **third** group is the Bride of Christ. That, of course being a reference to the true church of Jesus Christ. You and me if you're a born again believer.

The Great Harlot ... the Wife of Jehovah and the Bride of Christ ... three women representing these three groups and every man, woman and child falls into one of them.

Now ... the other thing that we need to do this morning is review that timeline of eschatological events that we've been memorizing, because with our entry into **chapter 19** ... the scene and season once again change so we'll want to see where we are

- 1. The Church Age (chapters 2 & 3)**
- 2. The Rapture of the Church from Earth to Heaven (chapter 4)**
- 3. The Bema Seat of Christ (chapter 4)**
- 4. The Seven Year Tribulation Period upon the Earth while the church is in Heaven (chapters 5 through 19)**
- 5. The Second Coming of Jesus with His church from Heaven to Earth (chapter 19)**
- 6. The Battle of Armageddon (chapter 19)**
- 7. The Thousand Year Reign of Peace or the Millennial Reign (chapter 20)**
- 8. Heavenly Eternity (chapters 21 & 22)**

But **chapter 19** focuses on an event that's not been on our timeline ... so let me sneak that in on you so you can see where it falls The Marriage of the Lamb ... often referred to as the Marriage Supper or Wedding Feast for reason that you'll understand by the end of our time together this morning.

And again ... if it would help you ... on the back table is a diagram of end time events that gives you a big-picture view, but also deals with some of the details so please help

yourself to one if you'd like.

Well ... let's read the **first 6 verses of chapter 19** together ...

Now most of this is a repeat of what we've already studied, but a couple of very quick reminders ...

God's wrath has been poured out to completion ... all the Scrolls have been opened ... all the Trumpets have sounded and all the Bowls have been emptied. And because of that ... the shout of "Hallelujah" rises up.

And we will be there and be a part of this ... if you're saved ... you will be there.

"Hallelujah" simply means praise God, and there are three reasons given for praise on this occasion ...

1. Because His judgments are righteous and true.
2. And because he has carried out exactly what that righteous judgment calls for.
3. And because His reign will never cease.

You know God's judgments are so often questioned ... and I think that part of this praise is mixed with some degree of shame and repentance. Because we are very judgmental of God's judgments.

So this cry in Heaven should have an impact on us now, because when we see things clearly and know all things ... then we will see and know just how foolish it was for us to question God's judgments.

Questions man's judgments ... question my judgments ... I get it wrong too often, but the Lord never does.

Another thing is that ... at first glance, it might seem rather insensitive for this group of heavenly saints to rejoice at the destruction of the unrighteous, but it's not.

Consider with me ... a serial killer. He's brutally murdered at least 10 children and has eluded the police for a number of years.

Q. When that evil person is finally captured ... would it be wrong to rejoice? – No, not at all. The world would literally be a safer and better place without him.

And that same fact causes this rejoicing.

Verses 7-10: So John falls down on one knee before this mighty angel and the angel says

... "Bless you my son!" – NO! Only God is to be worshipped and revered. Only God is to be bowed before.

Now ... we're going to spend the balance of our time together today, looking at this event known as the Marriage of the Lamb or the Marriage Supper of Marriage Feast, and for that I'd like you to turn with me to **Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew**.

What we have in this chapter is the Lord sitting down with His disciples just prior to His crucifixion and, at their request, He begins speaking with them about end-time events.

In the **chapter just prior**, the disciples came to Him and ask Him what signs would precede His Second Coming. Essentially they wanted to know when He was coming and **Matthew chapter 25** is the record of the Lord's response to that, but in typical Jesus-style – they ask "when" and He answers them with "how".

And He emphasis that it is not our job to know the day, nor the hour – and because we do not know the day nor the hour, we must always be watching and waiting and in a posture of readiness.

A point that He makes through a parable – that we've come to refer to as ;The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

It depicts a marriage ceremony, with the entire ceremony being an allegory of our marriage, as Christians, to the ultimate groom -- Jesus Christ.

Matt 25:1-13: There are three stages to these Jewish weddings;

The Match, The Betrothal and The Culmination:

First -- The Match; Remember that, despite how foreign it may sound to us, in a Jewish wedding, it is the father of the groom who selects the bride. The father would watch a number of young ladies for some time, trying to choose a mate that would please his son.

Q. And remember -- who arranged the first marriage? -- The Father. God the Father created and chose Eve for His earthly son, Adam.

The role that the bride's father played was a smaller one and really, it was more obstructive than anything else, because as long as his daughter dwelt with him she was a great benefit to the home. Giving her up to a groom was a loss to him and so he was only willing to give her up for a price.

And it's no different with us. Before we come to Jesus, we belong to Satan and are of value to his purposes. When Jesus was speaking to a group of lost Jews, He said;

**John 8:42 ... "If God were your Father, you would love Me ...but ... 44
"You are of your father the devil ...**

So just as the Jewish father of the groom purchased his son's bride, so too our Heavenly Father purchased us from the father of this world.

Now once the groom's father had selected the maiden that he was convinced would make a good wife for his son, he would enter into a negotiation process with the young lady's father. And ultimately a price (or "dowry") was agreed upon and the two fathers would enter into a covenant agreement with one another.

Note: In reality the dowry had two forms; the mohar, gift(s) given to the bride herself and the mattan, which was the gift given to the father and other members of her family.

The second stage is known as The Betrothal; To the Jews, the betrothal period was considered marriage. It was binding. A certificate of divorce was required to separate from a betrothal. And the betrothal stage is the stage that you and I are currently in in our relationship to our God. If you've accepted Jesus as your groom -- your Lord and Savior, then right now, you're in this betrothal period. A binding covenant.

So, once the covenant had been entered into by the fathers, the focus shifted to the bride and the bridegroom.

The groom would communicate to the bride a day and time that he would be coming to her father's house. Now this was very nerve-racking for the groom, because the bride had a choice. If she decided to reject the groom, she simply wouldn't answer the door when he came and the poor groom would just tuck his tail and head for home. But, if she decided to accept him as her groom, then she was expected to prepare a meal and invite him in when he arrived.

Rev 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

If the bride opened the door, they would share the meal and then seal, or ratify, the match by drinking a cup of wine together; much the same as our sacrament of communion.

And interestingly ... once the bride and groom had taken the cup together, neither of them would drink wine again until they did so at their wedding feast. Interesting because Jesus said to His followers ...

Matt 26:29 "... I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

It was also at this time that the bridegroom presented his bride with gifts (that part of the dowry known as the mohar) and this mohar (or gifts from the groom to the bride), served as proof of their betrothal. Now -- don't miss this -- our bridegroom, Jesus Christ said;

John 15:26 "When the Helper (that is, The Holy Spirit) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father ...

And in;

1 Cor 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts ... 7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

When the Jewish bride accepted her groom he gave her gifts, and likewise when we accept Jesus as our groom He gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The betrothal period could last up to a year and during that time the bride was expected to do three things:

First, she was to spend her time "occupying until the groom came". She was to be busy making blankets and clothing and such things as would benefit the couple during their marriage.

And this should remind us of the Lord's words to us in;

Luke 19:13 ... Occupy till I come. KJV

And you may have picked up on **verse 8 of this morning's text** that says that the good works and righteous acts of the saints will constitute the wedding garments when the congregation of the faithful are joined to Christ in marriage.

Which means that right now you and I are sewing our own wedding garments. Not that it's about works, but if your belief doesn't affect your behavior, then it's not really a belief – it's a mere charade.

The second thing the betrothed bride was expected to do, was to wear a veil anytime she was in public. The veil was to show that she now belonged to the groom. That she was "sanctified", that is; "set apart".

We may not wear a veil, but in **1 Pet 2:9**, the King James says that we are to be a "peculiar people". We are to be recognizable in this world, set apart in much the same way that the veil made the betrothed young woman recognizable. She was spoken for and so are we.

Isa 25: 7 ... on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.

The third responsibility given to the bride during her betrothal was known as the "Mikvah". This was a ceremonial bathing process in which the bride would immerse herself in water when she suspected the end of the betrothal and time of the wedding was

growing near. Likewise, we observe the sacrament of baptism as a ceremonial cleansing.

Meanwhile, during this period of betrothal, the groom was responsible for preparing the home that the two would live in. He would do this on land donated by his father and with supplies given to him by his father.

And ultimately it was the father who decided when his son could go get his bride. The father was the only one who knew when the period of betrothal would be over and the bride and groom would begin the marriage ceremony.

The groom would set about building the home -- often with a party of friends and family -- they would make a celebration of the building process.

And when the groom had completed the home and bridal chamber to his satisfaction he then had to get it inspected by his father.

That's where the father's fun came in. This is a young man who has been promised a bride and has promised himself to her -- so you can bet he was quite anxious to have his bride with him. But dad would come in, take a look around, rub his beard and with a little smirk say "Well son, you've done a great job, but my daughter-in-law deserves the best and, well, there are just a few things that I'd like for you to change." And so he would point out some changes that may or may not have been necessary, but regardless, the son was obligated to set about fixing them.

So he and his friends would re-gather and make all the changes and improvements that the father had suggested and then again call for inspection. Dad would come and take another look around rub his chin and say "well son -- it's much better ----- but, there are still a couple of things" And he would name a few more improvements that were to be made.

Of course this was very disappointing to this, overly anxious, groom-to-be, but he would faithfully go about the tasks and when the house was just perfect he would call good ole dad for the final inspection.

Dad would say "Son you have indeed built a beautiful home and you have completed all the repairs that I've ask of you. The house is almost perfect. But son, your bride is very precious and she deserves the very best that you can offer her, so there's just one more thing. If you'll just change this one last item then I think it will be ready for her."

Again -- the groom makes the repairs. No doubt grumbling under his breath, but then at a time when he doesn't expect it, the father returns, walks in and says "Son, you've done it. This is perfect -- go get your bride."

Then once the groom's feet touched earth again, he'd be off and running -- not straight to the brides house though -- first, he had to go get himself ready.

And this is exactly the picture that we need to have of our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Our bridegroom is anxious and in;

John 14:2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

But only the Father knows when He's going to say "OK Son -- go get Your bride." (Matt 24:36)

The third and final part of the marriage ceremony was The Culmination; The removal of the bride from her father's home.

As you picture this, you need to picture a great celebration. There was a procession that preceded the bridegroom as he traveled from his father's house to retrieve his bride and preceded the both of them on the return trip.

A witness or herald (typically a close friend of the groom), would run ahead of the groom and shout "the bridegroom is come, the wedding feast is about to begin" – inviting the community to come and celebrate with them.

In the case of Jesus Christ, His incarnation was heralded by John the Baptist (Matt 3:3), and His return for His bride will be heralded by an angelic trumpet (1 Cor 15:22)

Now, behind this herald was a group known as lamp-bearers with the groom and a party of friends and relatives behind them. And they traveled this way to the bride's house where the bridegroom's challenge was to snatch the bride away while her father was distracted. To steal her away from her father. It was a traditional game. And upon success, the whole procession would travel back to groom's Father's house where the 7 day marriage celebration took place -- beginning with a meal.

Rev 19:7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." ...

Then sometime after the meal the bride and groom would enter that tent-like structure called the "bridal chamber"; where the couple would spend the remainder of the seven day celebration, consummating the marriage – with their needs being fully attended to.

Now as joyous as this celebration was ... there was still a slight reservation up to this point ... because there was still the question of the bride's purity.

Q. Was she a virgin? – And so the wedding party would wait ... and it was the

responsibility of the groom to either produce blood stained bedding as proof of her virginity or to produce the bride to be taken out and stoned.

Now ... some of us would say ... eh-oh! Trouble! I've blown it ... I'm not pure!

Hey ... remember it's the groom's responsibility and so ... He shed his own blood as proof of my purity and your purity so that we would never have to face death in judgment.

The parable, as you've probably already figured out, jumps in at the transition between The Betrothal and The Culmination. The Ten virgin, lamp-bearers, having been alerted by the herald, have gone out and posted themselves in wait for the groom who has just been given the go-ahead by his father and is preparing himself with proper attire.

Notice with me that **verse one** says that each maiden came with their own lamp – that's a foundational Christian truth; someone else's lamp won't do. Each of us is responsible for our own lamp and what we do with it.

At first glance, you might think that the “**Ten virgins**” represent saved people, but they don't. Rather, the ten virgins represent “the church“, or the total of the church at the end of the age. And as is true for you and me, it was necessary for these ten virgin, lamp-bearers to always have their lamps at the ready, because the groom could be sent during the day or in the middle of the night.

So we have wise and we have foolish maidens.

The word “foolish” here is, “moros (mo-ros)” and it means stubborn or heedless. But let me emphasize that it can **NOT** be defined as “uninformed“ or “ignorant“. It's speaking of the one who knew, who understood and then knowingly, and repeatedly, made the wrong decision.

On the other hand, “prudent” or “wise” is “phronimos (fron'-ee-mos)”, meaning thoughtful or one who thinks ahead.

Now, “oil”, I'm sure you remember – when it's used symbolically, always speaks of the Holy Spirit. So the difference between the wise and the foolish virgin then is simply -- The Holy Spirit.

Notice also that all ten virgins arose and trimmed their lamps when the bridegroom was announced. They all made it look like their was oil in their lamps. They all went through the same external motions of trimming off the ugly, charred parts of their wicks, but down inside, where no one could see, there was no oil. The Holy Spirit was not there.

From the outside you would not have been able to tell the difference – until it was time to see their lights shine.

Conclusion: Now, to some it might seem selfish of the five, that they were unwilling to share their oil, but the Lord calls it wise. They said, “You have to get your own.“ The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit can’t be traded, shared, bought or sold. We become indwelt by the Spirit only by placing our faith in Christ.

And just as the lamp will not burn without oil, so too, our lights will not burn without the power of the Holy Spirit. You won’t be able to effectively love, teach, lead, worship, witness or walk. It has to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit or you’ll burn out and eventually burn up.

The Apostle Paul says in;

1 Thess 5:1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

And we learn in this parable that there is such a thing as too late. You can’t accept an invitation when the parties already come to pass;

Acts 2:38 ... "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

You must have accepted the invitation before the Father says to the Son “Go get your bride.”

Rom 8:9 ... you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

We’re to be in it for the long haul, but living like He’s coming back today. And when He does come back, those of us who have opened the door to Him will be whisked off for the greatest party ever held.

Q. Does Jesus know you? -- We’re all invited to the banquet, but tickets will be checked and they can’t be purchased at the door. The ticket into Heaven is “oil” and the way to get oil is faith in Jesus Christ. Simple!

Q. The Lord could have come back the day before you got saved, but He didn’t and aren’t you thankful?

And there are people who will get saved today and they’ll be thankful that the Lord didn’t come back yesterday. Make sure you’re not a “poser”!

Isa 25:6 The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And

refined, aged wine.

Q. The Wedding Feast ... are you going to be there?