

Marriage Supper/Feast

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For Discussion: Are You Hungry Yet?

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<https://www.raptureready.com/2023/05/31/are-you-hungry-yet-by-terry-james/>

Does Scripture distinguish between the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and the Marriage Feast?

Most commentators consider these terms synonymous. But since there is some controversy over whether the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is in Heaven or on Earth indicates that there may indeed be a distinction with the Supper being in Heaven and the Feast being on Earth.

Why do we think the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is in Heaven?

Because the Bible refers to it in a scene from Heaven...

Revelation 19:7-9 – *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.*” 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. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’”

This describes when the time would come for the Lamb of God to be joined unto His people, in a union so close it can only be compared to the marriage of a man and a woman.

- The marriage of the Lamb, who is the Messiah, is a picture used frequently throughout the Scriptures.
- In the Old Testament, Israel is presented as God’s wife, who is often unfaithful (Hosea 2:19-20, Isaiah 54:5, Ezekiel 16).
- In the New Testament, the church is presented as the fiancé of Jesus, waiting for this day of marriage (2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:25-32).

What do we do to make ourselves ready for this wedding?

And His wife has made herself ready: There is much for us to do, but it is ultimately a work God does in us (Ephesians 5:25-27). This point is emphasized when John notes, to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright.

What does the white linen represent?

In this perfect union with Jesus, His people will be clean and bright before Him. “Clean (katharos) reflects purity, loyalty and faithfulness.

- *For the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints:* Believers are created for divinely prepared good works. These “righteousnesses” (righteous acts) are what fill the “hope chest” of the bride of Jesus.

What light does 1st Century Jewish marriage customs shed on the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?

These wedding customs had three major parts:

- First, a marriage contract was signed by the parents of the bride and the bridegroom, and the parents of the bridegroom or the bridegroom himself would pay a dowry to the bride or her parents. This began what was called the betrothal period—what we would today call the engagement.
- The second step in the process usually occurred much later, when the bridegroom, accompanied by his male friends, went to the house of the bride. The bride would know in advance this was going to take place, and so she would be ready with her maidens, and they would all join the parade and end up at the bridegroom’s home.
- The marriage supper then follows as the third and final step. Many believe the marriage supper of the Lamb takes place in heaven between the rapture and the second coming (during the tribulation on earth).

What was the dowry paid by the Bridegroom’s Father?

The dowry paid by the bridegroom’s parent (God the Father) would be the blood of Christ shed on the Bride’s behalf. The Church on earth today, then, is “betrothed” to Christ, all believers should be watching and waiting for the appearance of the Bridegroom (the rapture).

- The second phase symbolizes the rapture of the Church, when Christ comes to claim His bride and take her to the Father’s house.

Who will be at the wedding Feast of Christ?

Attending the wedding feast will be not only the Church as the Bride of Christ, but others as well. The “others” include the Old Testament saints—they will not have been resurrected yet, but their souls/spirits will be in heaven with us.

John 14:2–3 – *My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am*

What other parallels between Jewish wedding traditions and our relationship to Christ are there?

The Mishnah Kiddushin (the section of the Talmud dealing with “dedication” or betrothal) specifies that a bride is acquired by a groom with three characteristics:

- the groom leaving his father’s home and traveling to the bride’s home to “purchase” her for a price.
- The groom gives a token or a dowry, and its value must be known to the bride.
- In all cases, the wife can only be acquired with her consent.

What was the betrothal of the Bride & Bridegroom?

The marriage contract, or ketubah, is then established, and from that moment on the bride is sanctified, or set apart, exclusively for her bridegroom.

- It is customary for the groom and bride to drink from a cup of wine over which a betrothal benediction has been said.

This prenuptial process can be seen as symbolic of Christ’s work on our behalf...

- Jesus left the home of His Father (heaven) and traveled to the home of His prospective Bride (earth) to purchase her for a price; that is, His own blood (1 Corinthians 7:23). His Bride has joyously consented to the match.
- He has given her a priceless token, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6–16).
- With the establishing of the ketubah (the New Covenant), Jesus’ Bride was sanctified for Him (1 Corinthians 6:11). The communion wine is symbolic of the covenant by which Christ obtained His Bride.

How will the marriage of the Bride and Bridegroom be consummated?

The Shulkhan Arukh, an exhaustive presentation of the details of Jewish law, elaborates regarding the two stages of marriage:

- the betrothal (kiddushin, meaning “sanctified”)
- and the consummation of the marriage (nisuin, translated “elevation”... taken to Heaven)

How was the Jewish betrothal different from how our culture considers engagement today?

Kiddushin is not engagement as we understand it. It is a binding agreement in which the woman is legally considered the wife of the man.

- It was routine in Jesus’ day for kiddushin and nisuin to be separated by as much as a year.
- During that time the bridegroom would construct the marital home.

What happens after the Bride is taken to the Father of the Groom’s home?

There is a wedding ceremony which was attended by a select few (most likely family), the bride would take part in a ritual cleansing.

- The Bride and Groom would consummate their marriage and the Jewish bride remained hidden at the groom’s father’s house for seven days.
- After this, the couple would attend a wedding feast in their honor.

It was customary for a wedding feast to include a much larger crowd than the ceremony itself, and it was a great celebration provided by the groom’s family.

Similarly, the Church will remain “hidden” for a period of seven years, during the tribulation period.

- After the seven days, the Jewish bride left the bridal chamber unveiled; likewise, after seven years the Church will return to earth with Christ, in full view of all (Colossians 3:4).

Why might we think the Wedding Feast is on earth?

The Jewish wedding customs with the main party taking place after the Bride is unveiled.

- So, it is likely there is a Wedding Supper in Heaven and then a Feast involving a larger party on Earth.

When will Jesus again drink the fruit of the vine with us?

Matthew 26:29 – *I say to you, 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.*

Certainly, the Father’s Kingdom is in Heaven so that is what we usually think of. But Andy Woods makes a strong case that the term “kingdom” is a technical term which always means the “Millennial Kingdom.”

- So, that would mean He would next drink with us at the Wedding Feast on Earth, and maybe not at the Wedding Supper in Heaven.
- It is interesting that Andy Wood advocates for the Wedding Supper in Heaven and makes no mention of a separate Wedding Feast on Earth.

The Kingdom of God is in Heaven, but the day is coming when it will be on Earth as well...

Matthew 6:10 – *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

How can the term “kingdom” be technical always referring to the “Millinreal Kingdom”?

Luke 17:20-21 – *Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you.**”*

This NKJV primary translation cannot be correct because Jesus was addressing the Pharisees who were unbelievers. The NKJV does have a note that reflects a better reflected in the American Standard Bible...

Luke 17:21 – *For behold, **the kingdom of God is in your midst.***

What else makes us think there will be a Wedding Feast on Earth?

The Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14) where the original invitees to the wedding refused their invitation and servants went out to the highways to fill the wedding hall with guests.

- Thomas Ice and Arnold Fruchtenbaum make a distinction between the Wedding of the Lamb in Heaven versus the Wedding Feast of the Lamb on Earth with no Wedding Supper in Heaven.

<https://www.raptureready.com/2015/11/10/the-marriage-supper-of-the-lamb-by-thomas-ice/>

Will there be a celebration when the Old Testament saints are resurrected?

The Old Testament saints will be resurrected following the Tribulation after Jesus returns to reign during the Millennial Kingdom...

Daniel 12:1-2 – *And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

We know that a resurrected David will rule over Israel during the Millennial Kingdom (Jeremiah 30:9). It would certainly make sense that there will be a great celebration for the resurrection of the Old Testament saints not to mention the great victory of Jesus over the Antichrist.

- So, it is likely there will be a Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Heaven with the New Testament saints and a Marriage Feast with the Old Testament saints.

Matthew 20:16 – *the last will be first, and the first last.*

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- As the Bride of Christ, we look forward to our Bridegroom coming for us.
- There will be a great celebration in Heaven and on Earth recognizing our marriage to the Lord.
- Whether there will be a meal in Heaven is TBD; there will certainly be one on Earth at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom