



June/July 1991 [Renald Showers](#)

The Marriage And Marriage Supper Of The Lamb Revelation 19:7-9

Introduction

Where will the Church be during the 70th week of Daniel 9 (the last seven years prior to the Second Coming of Christ, which has been popularly called the Tribulation period)? Several things presented in the Book of the Revelation indicate that the Church will be in Heaven with Christ during that time period. One of those things is the marriage and marriage supper of the Lamb.

The Reference to the Marriage and Marriage Supper of the Lamb

In [Revelation 19:7](#) John recorded part of the loud proclamation of a great multitude in Heaven (vv. 1, 6): "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Concerning the wife of the Lamb, John continued to write, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen

is the righteousnesses of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb” (vv. 8–9).

A study of Revelation 5–7; 12–15; 17; 19; 21–22 clearly indicates that the Lamb is Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords who shed His blood to cleanse sinners. [Romans 7:4](#); [2 Corinthians 11:2](#); and [Ephesians 5:22–33](#) indicate that the wife of the Lamb is the Church. In light of these identifications, it is evident that [Revelation 19:7–9](#) is referring to the marriage of Jesus Christ to the Church and the subsequent marriage supper.

Questions and Views Related to the Marriage and Marriage Supper of the Lamb

[Revelation 19:7–9](#) prompts two major questions: *When* and *where* will the marriage and marriage supper of the Lamb take place? At least three answers to these questions have been proposed. First, the marriage will occur when the Church is raptured to meet Christ in the air at His Second Coming and the marriage supper will take place on earth during the Millennium. Second, the marriage will occur in Heaven when the Church is raptured before the 70th week (Tribulation period), and the marriage supper will take place on earth during the Millennium. Third, the marriage will occur in Heaven when the Church is raptured before the 70th week (Tribulation period), and the marriage supper will take place in Heaven during the seven years of the 70th week.

The Relationship of [Revelation 19:7–9](#) to Jewish Marriage Customs

There are good reasons for being convinced of the third view; but before those reasons are examined, two things should be noted. First, the terms “marriage” and “marriage supper” in Revelation 19 are related to Jewish marriage customs in Bible times.

Second, Jewish marriage customs in Bible times involved three major steps. The first step was betrothal, the establishment of the marriage covenant that bound the man and woman together as husband and wife ([Mal. 2:14](#); [Mt. 1:18-19](#)).

The second step was the *taking* of the bride or wife by the groom from her house to his father's house ([Mt. 25:1-8](#)). "The essence of the marriage ceremony or festivities was the taking of the bride from her father's house and bringing her to the house of the bridegroom or his father."¹ This taking of the bride was usually done at night approximately one year after the betrothal.^{2,3} It involved the consummation of the marriage through physical union of the bride and groom on the first night at the groom's father's house.⁴ Since this second step was the essence of the marriage ceremony, it was regarded as the wedding or marriage ([Mt. 22:2-13](#); [25:10](#)). Thus, it is this second step that corresponds to the expression "marriage of the Lamb" in [Revelation 19:7](#).

The third step was the marriage supper or feast to which guests had already been called and assembled. Once the marriage had been consummated by the bride and groom, the wedding guests would feast and make merry for seven days.⁵ Thus, the marriage supper lasted for one week ([Gen. 29:21-23, 27-28](#); [Jud. 14:1-2, 10-12, 17](#)), and it corresponds to the expression "marriage supper of the Lamb" in [Revelation 19:9](#).

In light of what has been seen, the following conclusions can be drawn concerning the relationship of the three steps of Jewish marriage customs to the marriage of Christ and the Church. First, the betrothal of Christ and the Church is taking place during the present Church age as people trust Jesus Christ to be their Savior ([2 Cor. 11:2](#)). Second, in the future Christ will *take* His bride, the Church, from this world to His Father's house in Heaven when He comes to rapture it ([Jn. 14:2-3](#); [1 Th. 4:13-18](#)). This will be the "marriage of the Lamb." Third, after the Rapture of the Church, the "marriage supper of the Lamb" will take place with the wedding guests who will have already been called and assembled.

Evidences for the Third View

Earlier it was stated that there are good reasons for believing that the marriage of the Lamb will occur in *Heaven* when the Church is raptured *before* the 70th week (Tribulation period) and that the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place in *Heaven* during the *seven years* of the 70th week. Those reasons will now be examined.

First, normally the wedding or marriage (the second step) did not take place at the home of the bride. One must remember that the established custom was to hold the wedding in the house of the bridegroom or his parents. The bridegroom fetches the bride and brings her to his house, where the bridal table and chamber are ready.⁶ In harmony with this custom, Christ indicated that after preparing living accommodations for His bride in His Father's house in Heaven, He would come from there again and receive His bride unto Himself so that His bride could be where He is (in His Father's house in Heaven) ([Jn. 14:2-3](#)). Christ did not say that He would come and join His bride so that He could be where she is (on the earth). This established marriage custom and Christ's teaching in harmony with it indicate that the Rapture of the Church and marriage of the Lamb will not take place at the Second Coming of Christ, because at His Second Coming Christ will not return to His Father's house in Heaven. Instead, He will come to the earth. Thus, the Rapture of the Church and marriage of the Lamb must take place sometime before the Second Coming of Christ, and the Rapture of the Church and marriage of the Lamb must be separate events from the Second Coming.

In Bible times the marriage was a joyous, festive occasion...characterized by mirth and gladness.

Second, in Bible times the marriage was a joyous, festive occasion. The taking of the bride by the groom was characterized by mirth and gladness ([Jer. 7:34](#); [16:9](#); [25:10](#); [33:11](#)). Jesus indicated the same thing when He emphasized that it is impossible to mix the joy of a wedding with the mourning of a funeral ([Mt. 9:15](#); [Mk. 2:19](#); [Lk. 5:34](#)).⁷

It should be noted that the mood at the Second Coming will be just the opposite of the joyous, festive mood of the marriage. The description of the Second Coming in Revelation 19 portrays Christ, not as a happy groom coming with joyful companions to take His bride to His Father's house, but as a terrifying warrior-king coming with armies from Heaven to administer judgment and death upon rebellious humanity. The marriage customs of Bible times provided a festive marriage supper for wedding guests, but the Second Coming will provide a radically different kind of supper—a funeral supper of dead flesh for the fowl of the earth ([Rev. 19:17-18, 21](#)).

Since Jesus taught that it is impossible to mix the joy of a wedding with the mourning of a funeral, and since the Second Coming will produce death for a great mass of humanity, it must be concluded that the marriage of the Lamb will not occur at the Second Coming of Christ. The Rapture of the Church and marriage of the Lamb must take place sometime before the Second Coming and must be events separate from the Second Coming.

Third, it was customary for the marriage supper to be held at the home of the groom or his parents, not at the home of the bride. One writer declares, "The bridegroom escorted the whole wedding party, now including the bride and her companions ([Ps. 45:14b](#)), to his own or his father's house for the 'marriage supper' ([Rev. 19:9](#)) ... The wedding feast ... was normally given by the father of the groom."⁸ [Matthew 22:1-4](#) indicates the same thing. Concerning the location of the marriage supper, another writer states, "The older tradition points to the house of the groom's parents as the proper place."⁹ In harmony with this custom, the marriage supper of the Lamb should take place at Christ's Father's house in Heaven, not at His bride's dwelling place on earth. This militates against an earthly marriage supper of the Lamb.

Fourth, the marriage supper began on the same night that the groom took his bride to his father's house and consummated their marriage through physical union. After the marriage was consummated, the groom announced the

consummation to his friend standing outside the bridal chamber ([Ps. 19:5](#); [Jn. 3:29](#)), and the announcement was then delivered to the wedding guests who had already assembled at the groom's father's house. Upon receiving this news, the guests began to feast and make merry.¹⁰ Thus, the marriage supper began very shortly after the groom brought his bride to his father's house. In harmony with this custom, the marriage supper of the Lamb must begin very shortly after Christ takes His bride, the Church, to His Father's house in Heaven at the time of the Rapture.

Since, as noted earlier, the Rapture of the Church and the marriage of the Lamb will take place sometime *before* the Second Coming, and since the Millennium will begin *after* the Second Coming ([Rev. 19-20](#)), it appears that the Millennium will not begin very shortly after Christ takes His bride, the Church, to His Father's house in Heaven at the time of the Rapture, and the marriage supper of the Lamb will not, therefore, take place during the Millennium.

Fifth, the Old Testament teaches that during the Millennium there will be another marriage supper, different from the marriage supper of the Lamb. This millennial marriage supper will be associated with the second marriage of God and the nation of Israel. At the beginning of [Isaiah 25:6ff](#), a passage describing the blessings of the future Millennium, Isaiah declared, "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees." The word for "feast" in verse 6 is the same as that used for the wedding feast in [Judges 14:10, 12, 17](#). Isaiah's statement indicates that the wedding guests at this millennial marriage supper for God and Israel will be all the other people living in the world at that time. "Isaiah was speaking of a future time when (after God's worldwide judgment) His people in Israel and other nations will feast together in peace and prosperity. This is the 1,000 year reign of Christ."¹¹

The background behind this millennial marriage feast is as follows: The Old Testament teaches that God betrothed Israel (bound the nation to Himself as His wife) through the Mosaic Covenant at Mount Sinai ([Jer. 2:2](#); [Ezek. 16:8](#)), but Israel

repeatedly broke the covenant through spiritual adultery ([Jer. 3:1-3, 6-9, 20](#); [Ezek. 16:32, 59](#); [Hos. 1:2; 2:2, 5; 3:1; 4:12, 18; 5:3-4; 6:7, 10; 7:4; 8:1; 9:1](#)). God divorced Israel, but not permanently ([Isa. 50:1; 54:7-8; Jer. 3:12](#)). He did not regard the divorce as a termination of His marriage with the nation ([Jer. 3:14](#); cp. v. [8](#)). *The marriage supper of the Lamb should take place at Christ's Father's house in Heaven, not at His bride's dwelling place on earth.*

God has been judging the nation for its adultery ([Ezek. 16:38](#)). Through this judgment He will stop Israel's unfaithfulness, calm His fury, and lose His jealousy and anger ([Ezek. 16:41-42](#)). When Israel repents in the future at the Second Coming of Christ ([Hos. 3:5; 5:15-6:1; Zech. 12:10-14](#)), God will cleanse the nation ([Zech. 13:1](#)), love it freely ([Hos. 14:1-4](#)), and betroth it to Himself forever ([Hos. 2:19-20](#)) through the establishment of an everlasting covenant ([Isa. 55:3; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; 50:4-5; Ezek. 16:60-62; 37:21-28](#)). Israel will be adorned like a bride ([Isa. 61:10](#)); God will delight in and rejoice over Jerusalem as a groom rejoices over his bride; and the land of Israel will be married to God ([Isa. 62:1-5](#)). Thus, at the Second Coming God and Israel will go through betrothal and marriage a second time, and then their marriage supper will take place during the Millennium after the Second Coming.

The following quotation relates the rabbinical view of this Old Testament teaching.

But the final renewal of the covenant between God and the people, intimated by the prophet, was expected by the Rabbis in the days of the Messiah. Thus we often find the view that in these days there will take place the true marriage feast. In this connection the present age is that of engagement, the seven years of Gog will be the period immediately prior to the marriage, the marriage itself will dawn with the resurrection and the great marriage feast will be eaten in the future world.¹²

This future marriage of God and the marriage of the Lamb have two different brides. The marriage of God has the nation of Israel as its bride. As noted earlier,

the marriage of the Lamb has the Church as its bride. It appears that these marriages also have two different grooms. As noted earlier, the marriage of the Lamb has Christ (the Messiah) as its groom. By contrast, one scholar asserts, "But nowhere in the OT is the Messiah presented as a bridegroom."¹³ This means, then, that the future marriage of God to Israel presented in the Old Testament has God the Father, not the Messiah, as its groom.

Since these marriages have two different brides and grooms, it must be concluded that the future marriage of God to Israel and the marriage of the Lamb are two different marriages. Since these marriages are different, the marriage suppers associated with them must also be different, and it is very probable that these different suppers will take place at different times. Thus, since the marriage supper associated with the future marriage of God to Israel will take place during the Millennium, the marriage supper of the Lamb probably will not occur during the Millennium.

Sixth, as noted earlier, it was customary for the wedding supper of Bible times to last for one week, or seven days.¹⁴ It is the conviction of this writer that, in relationship to the marriage supper of the Lamb, the seven years of the 70th week of Daniel 9 will correlate to that time period. According to this view, then, the Rapture of the Church and marriage of the Lamb will occur *before* the 70th week (Tribulation period), and the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place in *Heaven during* the 70th week.

Concluding Considerations

The conclusion drawn from all that has been seen concerning the marriage and marriage supper of the Lamb is that the Church will be in Heaven with Christ, not on the earth, throughout the entire 70th week.

If the marriage and marriage supper of the Lamb are not to take place at the Second Coming and during the Millennium, why are they mentioned in Revelation 19 between the judgment of the great whore and the Second Coming of Christ?

Two possible reasons are as follows: First, to draw a contrast between the great whore, with all her impure unions, and the bride of Christ, with her pure union with Christ; and second, to draw a contrast between the blessing of those called to the marriage supper of the Lamb and the judgment of rebels at the Second Coming of Christ.

One side issue should be noted. According to [Revelation 19:9](#), wedding guests will be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and those who are called will be blessed. Since wedding guests are not the bride, it must be concluded that the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb will not be part of Christ's bride, the Church. But since the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb will be blessed and will be in Heaven (since that is where the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place), they must be believers (cp. [Rev. 20:6](#)). The fact that the guests will be believers, but not part of the Church, forces one to conclude that not all believers of all ages of history belong to the Church. God has groups of believers distinct from the Church. The souls of Old Testament saints will already be assembled in Heaven when the Church arrives there at the time of the Rapture and marriage of the Lamb. Those Old Testament saints will be guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

ENDNOTE

1. John Rea, "Marriage," *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2 (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1975), 1082.
2. George B. Eager, "Marriage," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 1998.
3. "Marriage," *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7, ed. Isaac Landman (New York, NY: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Co., Inc. 1948), 372.
4. Ibid.
5. "Huppah," *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, ed. Isaac Landman (New York, NY: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Co., Inc., 1948), 504.
6. Joachim Jeremias, "numphe, numphios," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 4, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 1100.
7. Ibid., 1103.
8. Rea, "Marriage," 1082.
9. Eager, "Marriage," 1998.
10. "Huppah," Vol. 5, 504.

11. John A. Martin, "Isaiah," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary—Old Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1073-74.
12. Ethelbert Stauffer, "gameo, gamos," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 654.
13. Jeremias, "numphe, numphios," 1101.
14. "Huppah," Vol. 5, 504.



(1936-2019) Renald E. Showers was a world-renowned professor, theologian, and author who served with The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry for more than 30 years. He retired shortly before the Lord called him home on April 4, 2019.