

## Two Great Suppers at the End of the Age

Revelation 19 speaks of two different and distinct suppers that will occur in the “end times”. Everyone will be a participant in one or the other. In Rev.19:9 we read “blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” In Rev.19:17 all the birds are called to come to another “great supper of God”. Unfortunately, the people at this supper will not be blessed, but instead will be the main course. The birds are told to come so that “you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of mighty men”. I take it these are the warriors that will gather to oppose Christ at His second coming; whose fate will be to be “killed with the sword of judgment that comes from the mouth of Him (Christ)”.

### The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

This marriage supper uses the analogy of the first century Middle Eastern marriage customs. It is necessary to first describe the three phases of the typical Middle Eastern marriage, and then identify who the bride and groom are. Next we must answer the questions of when the three phases in view here will take place and where they will take place.

The first step was betrothal or engagement when the deal was made. It was a binding agreement for future marriage made by both parties. The second step was for the groom to take the bride from her house to his father’s house. This was done at least a year after the engagement. It was at this stage that the marriage was consummated by physical union. Thus at this stage they were considered man and wife—fully married. The third stage was the marriage supper or feast to which all the guests were invited. The wedding guests would celebrate for seven days. This third phase corresponds to the “marriage supper of the Lamb” in Rev.19:9.

Who are the bride and groom? A review of the New Testament relationship of Christ and the Church will make this obvious. Jesus is consistently called the Lamb of God beginning with His introduction by John the Baptist in John 1:29, and culminating in Revelation in such passages as 5:8, 6:1, and 7:9-10. Such passages as 2 Cor.11:2 and Eph.5:23-32 make it clear that the bride is the New Testament Church. Therefore Rev.19:7-9 is referring to the marriage supper of Jesus Christ and His Church.

The marriage engagement or betrothal is completed at the Cross when you could say Jesus paid the dowry for His bride. The second phase will be completed when Jesus takes His bride to heaven, to His Father’s house. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 is the key passage for this phase that we call the rapture of the Church. Since the scene in Rev.19 takes place in heaven just prior to the second coming of Christ, I take it that the rapture occurs before the judgments in Revelation, and therefore as a separate and distinct event from the second coming. The church is seen in heaven with its resurrection bodies fully rewarded with the “fine linen, bright and clean” representing the righteous acts of the saints

(Rev.19:8). The third phase is the “marriage supper” of Rev.19:9 which is the celebration feast in heaven which may last the 7 years of the tribulation on earth.

To recap, the engagement of Christ and those in the church is taking place as people receive Jesus as their Savior now in the “church age”. In the future, Christ will come and take His bride, the church, as He said in John 14:2-3, “I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am there you may be also”, ie Heaven. After the Rapture, the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place along with the wedding guests who will have been called and assembled in heaven. These guests are in heaven, but are not the bride (the church), so they may represent Old Testament believers or also tribulation saints who were martyred before the second coming. They are a distinct group in heaven that is invited and are blessed.

### The Great Supper of God

In Revelation 14:18-20, John saw a vision of a great harvest of the “vine of the earth”. We are told this harvest represents the wrath of God poured out in judgment on rebellious mankind. The resultant slaughter is likened to “the great wine press of the wrath of God.” Out of the press the blood and carnage will be so great that it will cover 200 miles. This can only be anticipating the great final battle at Armageddon spoken of in Revelation 16:16, and actually carried out in Rev. 19:17-21. It will not be much of a battle because when Jesus returns with the armies of heaven, He will slay all the men in all the armies of the world who have assembled there, and the carnage will be very great.

Thus, we have the invitation from God to all the carnivorous birds to gather “to eat the flesh of the kings and commanders and the mighty men” who will be slain there. Before you get too upset with me for writing about the blood and carnage, don’t forget that all the O.T. prophets looked forward to this coming day. Jesus warned of it, and Paul taught his churches about it. Throughout the book of Revelation, the heavenly host is rejoicing that God’s righteous wrath is coming to end all injustice, rebellion, violence, and depravity. Therefore, these events are necessary to cleanse the earth and bring about the Kingdom of God.

This horrific supper of God tells the story of the arrogant, violent, ambitious men who will be made food for vultures. The Bible makes it very clear they deserve it, and that God gave them every opportunity and evidence to receive their Savior and along with Him, God’s grace.

Rather than lament their fate, let us who by the grace of God, will be the bride of Christ, and so celebrate at the “marriage supper of the Lamb”, rejoice and praise God. The choice is available to all---which supper do you want to attend?

CHARLIE TAYLOR