

"THE IDENTITY OF THE GUESTS "

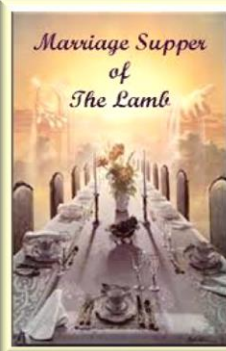
Some invited to the wedding ceremony are guests and not the Bride. Obviously, a bride is never invited to a wedding supper, nor is a bridegroom. Those who are invited are the friends of the bride and groom. Who are these friends or guests? It cannot be the Church because the Church is the Bride. John the Baptist, one of the last Old Testament saints, indicated that he was a friend of the Bridegroom. (John 3 v.29) These Old Testament saints will be in heaven and will have their rewards, but they are not the Church, not the Bride of the Christ. They are the friends of the Bride and Bridegroom, who at this point can be seen as the ones invited as guests to the feast. So then all the believing dead from Adam until the resurrection of Christ will be guests at this feast. In addition to them will appear those who have received the Savior during the Tribulation, both Jew and Gentile, many of who will have been martyred for the testimony of Christ. Not to imply that the Old Testament saints are inferior to the Church, or the body of Christ, but merely to point out that this is a special blessing for the Church.

"WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT GOD'S GREAT LOVE OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST JESUS ?"

Romans 10 :14-18 -But how are they to call on One in Whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in One of Whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim Him? And how are they to proclaim Him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the Word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

"WE ARE HIS WITNESS"

One of the greatest privileges God has entrusted to us is that we have been chosen to carry on the work that Jesus Christ came to this earth to accomplish. Just before He ascended, He told His disciples, "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). We are here today as Christians because someone in the chain was faithful to tell us of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Great Commission, Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28:18-19). "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Relying on His authority and power, we tell people about the saving grace to be found at the cross of Jesus Christ.



In Apostle John's vision in Revelation 19:7-10, "Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. John saw and heard the heavenly multitudes praising God because the wedding feast of the Lamb—literally, the "Marriage Supper"—was about to begin.

"THE JEWISH WEDDING CUSTOMS"

The concept of the marriage supper is better understood in light of the wedding customs in the time of Christ. These wedding customs had three major parts.

"FIRST STEP"



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. This period was the one Joseph and Mary were in when she was found to be with child (Matthew 1:18; Luke 2:5).

"DOWRY IS PAID"

"SECOND STEP"



In the process usually occurred a year later, when the bridegroom, accompanied by his male friends, went to the house of the bride at midnight, creating a torchlight parade through the streets. 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. This custom is the basis of the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

"THE GROOM RECEIVES HIS BRIDE"



"The Wedding Feast"

"THIRD STEP"

Is the Marriage Supper itself, which might go on for days, as illustrated by the "Wedding at Cana" in John 2:1-2.