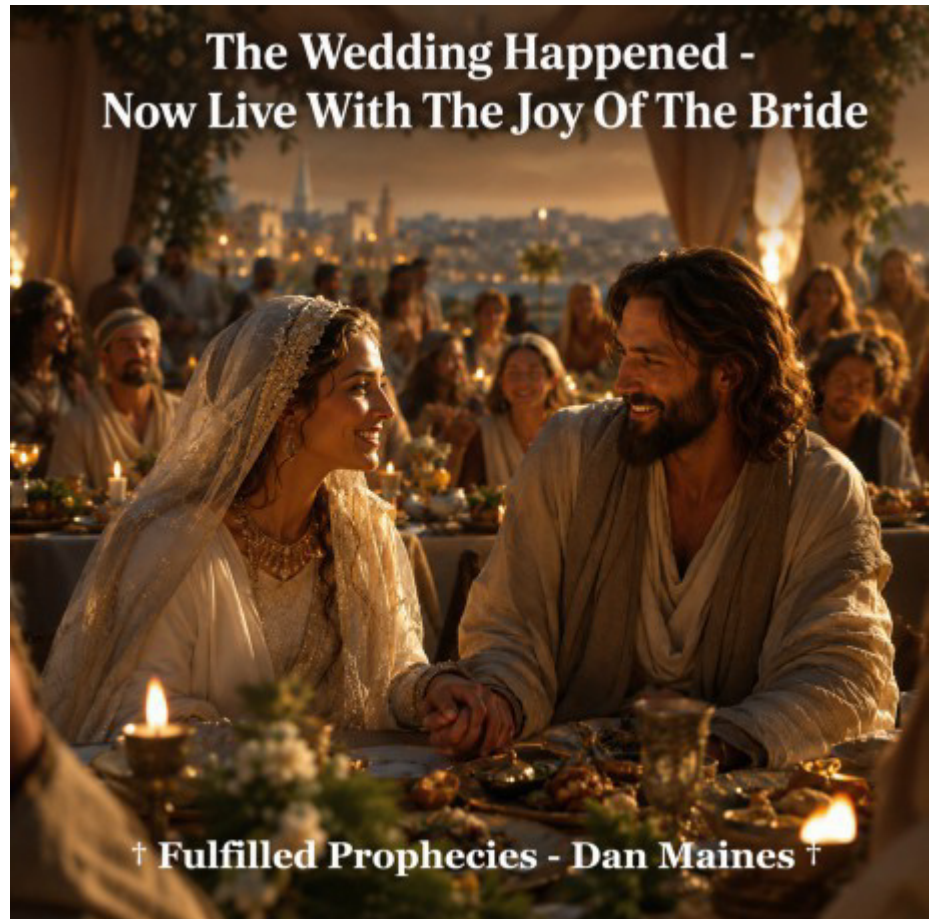


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**The Wedding
Happened - Now
Live With The Joy
Of The Bride**



By Dan Maines

The Wedding Happened - Now Live With The Joy Of The Bride

Introduction

† Much of Christianity has been taught to live like a bride who has been standing at the altar for two thousand years, still waiting for the Bridegroom to arrive. But the New Testament doesn't leave the wedding endlessly postponed. Revelation announced that the marriage of the Lamb had come, the bride had made herself ready, and the covenant city would be revealed as the Lamb's wife.

† The fulfilled perspective doesn't remove our hope, it shows us that Christ accomplished what He promised. The wedding wasn't canceled, delayed, or moved thousands of years beyond the generation that received the promise. The old covenant order passed away, the New Covenant was fully established, and the bride now lives in covenant union with her Bridegroom (Hebrews 8:13; Revelation 19:7).

† This changes the emotional center of fulfilled eschatology. We're not supposed to spend our lives disappointed that Jesus hasn't completed His prophetic promises. We're invited to rejoice because the Bridegroom came in judgment against the old covenant city and openly established the New Jerusalem as His covenant bride (Matthew 24:30, 34; Revelation 21:2, 9-10).

† Fulfilled prophecy should produce joy. We're not standing outside the wedding hall listening for footsteps. We're living in the covenant reality the wedding established.

Revelation 19:7-9

Let's rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has prepared herself. 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. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

† Notice the language John was commanded to write, the marriage of the Lamb "is come." Revelation presents the wedding as the approaching climax of the covenantal events revealed to John's original audience (Revelation 1:1, 3).

† The response to the marriage isn't fear, disappointment, or endless waiting. It's rejoicing. The prophetic wedding is presented as good news because God's covenant purposes were reaching their promised fulfillment (Isaiah 62:4-5).

† The bride making herself ready fits the first-century transition between the old covenant order and the fully manifested New Covenant order. The saints were being prepared for what Revelation declared was near (Revelation 22:6, 10).

† The marriage supper represents covenant fellowship and celebration. Jesus had already used wedding and banquet imagery to describe the arrival of the kingdom and the judgment associated with rejecting its invitation (Matthew 22:1-14; Matthew 25:1-13).

Revelation 21:2

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

† John identifies the bride through the imagery of the holy city, New Jerusalem. This isn't modern geopolitical Jerusalem. It's the covenant city from above, associated with God's redeemed people (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-24).

† The direction matters. John doesn't describe God's people abandoning creation so they can permanently escape into heaven. He sees New Jerusalem coming down from God. The great biblical story reaches its covenant goal when God's dwelling is with His people (Revelation 21:3).

† The bride is "made ready." Revelation 19 announced that the wife had made herself ready, and Revelation 21 shows the glorious covenant reality resulting from that preparation (Revelation 19:7).

† We aren't waiting for New Jerusalem to become our covenant home. Hebrews told first-century believers that they had already come to Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem as they approached the completion of that covenant transition (Hebrews 12:22-28).

Revelation 21:9-10

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

† Scripture interprets the symbol for us. The angel says he'll

show John "the bride, the wife of the Lamb," and then shows him the holy city Jerusalem. The bride and New Jerusalem belong to the same covenant picture.

† This stands in deliberate contrast with the condemned city earlier in Revelation. One city is judged, while another is revealed in glory. The movement is from the old covenant order under judgment to the New Covenant order in Christ (Revelation 18:2, 19-21; Revelation 21:1-2).

† The Lamb doesn't remain an eternal fiance waiting for a wedding that never arrives. Revelation calls the New Jerusalem "the wife of the Lamb." Wife is marriage language, not perpetual engagement language.

† The joy of fulfilled eschatology is covenant union. God's people aren't waiting for Christ to someday establish access to Him. Through Christ we have access to the Father and belong to God's household now (Ephesians 2:18-22).

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

† Hebrews doesn't tell these believers that Mount Zion and heavenly Jerusalem were completely unrelated realities reserved for people thousands of years later. It says, "you have come." They were already participating in the heavenly covenant reality while the old order was approaching removal (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:26-28).

† Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant. The wedding imagery of Revelation and the heavenly Jerusalem language of Hebrews describe the same great covenant movement, away from the temporary order and into the permanent kingdom established through Christ.

† This is why believers today don't need to search for another

covenant city. Our relationship with God isn't centered on an earthly temple, earthly priesthood, or earthly Jerusalem. Our access is through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Galatians 4:25-26

Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is enslaved with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

† Paul establishes the covenant contrast clearly. There was a Jerusalem associated with bondage, and there was a Jerusalem above associated with freedom.

† This helps interpret Revelation's two-city contrast. The prophetic story isn't ultimately about rebuilding the old Jerusalem as the center of God's redemptive program. It's about the triumph of the Jerusalem above (Revelation 21:2).

† Paul says the Jerusalem above "is our mother." New Jerusalem wasn't invented at the end of Revelation. The apostles were already teaching the church to understand its identity through this heavenly covenant reality.

† The bride therefore represents freedom, not bondage. Living as the bride means living in the liberty of the New Covenant rather than longing for the restoration of the covenant system that was passing away (Galatians 5:1).

Revelation 22:17

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires, take the water of life without cost.

† Look at what the bride is doing after she's revealed. She's inviting people to come. She's not sitting silently waiting to become the bride someday. She participates with the Spirit in extending the invitation of life.

† This is one of the most beautiful pictures of our present calling. The fulfilled kingdom isn't closed. The water of life continues to be offered freely. The nations can enter the light and life found in Christ (Revelation 21:24-26).

† Fulfilled eschatology should therefore create evangelistic joy,

not prophetic inactivity. Because Christ fulfilled His covenant promises, we can confidently tell thirsty people that the water of life is available now.

† The bride's message isn't "Wait with us because perhaps someday the wedding will happen." Her message is "Come." Christ has opened the way, and those who thirst are invited to receive life freely.

Historical References

† Josephus described the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, including famine, warfare, fire, and the collapse of the city that had stood at the center of the old covenant world. His account provides important historical background for understanding the first-century judgment setting surrounding Jesus' warnings about Jerusalem (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7).

† Tacitus also recorded the Roman war against Jerusalem and the destruction associated with the conflict, independently confirming the historical setting in which the old Jerusalem and its temple fell (Tacitus, Histories, Book 5).

† Eusebius later connected the calamities that came upon Jerusalem with the judgment that followed the rejection of Christ and recorded the tradition that believers left Jerusalem before the city's destruction (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7).

† These historical witnesses don't establish doctrine by themselves, Scripture does that. But they confirm that the first-century generation actually experienced the enormous covenantal judgment Jesus and the apostles had warned was approaching.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We can live with joy because we're not waiting for God to finish an unfinished covenant. Jesus succeeded. The Bridegroom kept His promise, and the New Covenant kingdom stands.

† We can live with assurance because our relationship with God

isn't based on an earthly temple, earthly priesthood, or earthly city. Our access to the Father is through Jesus Christ.

† We can live with freedom because our Jerusalem is above. We're children of the free woman, not slaves under the covenant represented by Sinai and the old Jerusalem (Galatians 4:24-31).

† We can live with gratitude because the marriage imagery tells us something deeply personal about salvation. Christ didn't merely rescue a people from judgment, He brought them into covenant fellowship with Himself.

† We can stop treating Christianity like a divine waiting room. The kingdom isn't perpetually "almost here." The Bridegroom didn't fail to arrive. The wedding wasn't postponed for thousands of years.

† We can celebrate fulfilled prophecy instead of fearing it. The end of the old covenant age meant the full establishment of something better, an unshakable kingdom, direct covenant access to God, and the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-28).

† We can invite others with confidence. The Spirit and the bride still say, "Come." The water of life is freely available in Christ.

† The fulfilled message isn't, "Keep waiting." It's, "Rejoice." The marriage came, the New Jerusalem was revealed, the kingdom can't be shaken, and Jesus Christ reigns.

† We're not abandoned bridesmaids staring down an empty road wondering when the Bridegroom will finally appear. We live in the joy of accomplished redemption and covenant union with Christ.

† The wedding happened. Now live with the joy of the bride.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Did Revelation say the marriage of the Lamb would remain future for thousands of years?

A: No. John was told that the things revealed in Revelation would shortly come to pass and that the time was near (Revelation 1:1, 3; 22:6, 10). Revelation 19 announces that the

marriage had come.

Q: Who is the bride in Revelation?

A: Revelation identifies the bride with the holy city, New Jerusalem, the wife of the Lamb (Revelation 21:2, 9-10).

Q: Is New Jerusalem the modern earthly city of Jerusalem?

A: No. Paul distinguishes the Jerusalem in bondage from "the Jerusalem that is above," which is free, and Hebrews identifies the heavenly Jerusalem as the city of the living God (Galatians 4:25-26; Hebrews 12:22).

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean Christians have nothing left to look forward to?

A: No. Fulfillment means we live inside the accomplished kingdom rather than waiting for its prophetic establishment. We enjoy Christ, proclaim the gospel, drink from the water of life, grow in grace, serve others, and eventually depart this earthly life to be with Christ (Revelation 22:17; Philippians 1:21-23).

Q: What should the fulfillment of the wedding produce in believers?

A: Joy. Revelation itself says, "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad" because the marriage of the Lamb had come (Revelation 19:7).

Q: What should the bride be doing now?

A: Inviting others to Christ. Revelation closes with the Spirit and the bride saying, "Come," and offering the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Revelation 19:7-9; Revelation 21:2; Revelation 21:9-10;

Hebrews 12:22-24; Galatians 4:25-26; Revelation 22:17
† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7

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