

Ladies Home Journey

Role Call for The Bride of Jesus Christ

Introduction

Love may be priceless but weddings can be expensive. On average, US couples spend \$20,398 for their wedding. The majority of couples spend between \$15,299 and \$25,498 while their wedding budget is typically 50% less than the amount spent. This does not include cost for a honeymoon or engagement ring.

According to the Bridal Association of America the average wedding gown costs \$1,505.

In the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, the church is returning to the earth with Jesus after a wedding ceremony has taken place in Heaven. It takes place after the believers of the Church Age have been resurrected and raptured. It includes all the Christians - men and women - from the resurrection of Jesus Christ until He returns for us.

The final stage of the Christian woman on her journey home to Heaven, then, is to join with all the church as the bride of Jesus Christ.

A major emphasis in verses seven through ten is on the “fine linen” garment the bride is wearing. **It’s your wedding garment and it will be beautiful.**

Revelation 19:7 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.”

In keeping with Jewish marriage customs, the groom comes suddenly and takes his bride home for a private ceremony. Then they celebrate with family and friends in a marriage supper.

Our being resurrected and raptured to Heaven, then, is compared to a marriage ceremony. The Second Coming of Jesus to earth is depicted as a marriage supper at which He shows-off His bride.

The angel remarked that “His wife has made herself ready.” This is explained using the analogy of clothing. It’s really very powerful.

The lost and hopeless spiritual condition of the human race is compared to clothing.

Listen to this description from the prophet Zechariah:

Zechariah 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him.

Zechariah 3:2 And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Zechariah 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.

Zechariah 3:4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."

Zechariah 3:5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by.

If you were to look upon Joshua you would have seen him in his magnificent priestly garments. They were elaborate, exquisite garments. The high priest would look magnificent as he performed the tasks of the Temple.

But he didn't look that way to everyone! You're told in verse three that Joshua was clothed with "filthy garments." The word "filthy" means *smearred with human excrement*.

Did he fall into sewage rushing to the Temple? Why would he enter the Temple in such stained and spoiled garments?

He didn't fall – but Adam did! You are being shown the same man, in the same garments, from two perspectives.

- From the natural and earthly perspective, his garments were fine.
- From the supernatural and heavenly perspective, his garments were filthy.

As high priest, Joshua represented and stood for all Jews. Their finest was filthy.

Joshua can also be seen as your representative! In a much beloved verse, Isaiah said "But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags..." (64:6). The entire human race is filthy when seen from the supernatural and heavenly perspective.

When you are saved God does for you what He did for Joshua. He exchanges your garments for His own - a robe of righteousness.

Isaiah 61:10 says,

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness...

OK, so why does the angel say, "His wife has made herself ready?" Look at verse eight of Revelation nineteen:

Revelation 19:8 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.

Maybe something that Isaiah additionally said will help. The whole of Isaiah 61:10 reads,

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness. As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, **And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.**

You were “granted,” or given, a spiritual robe of righteousness when you received Jesus as your Savior. Afterwards you have the privilege of adorning your robe by your “righteous acts” as His “saint.” You don’t earn or add to your salvation; you simply earn rewards which will adorn your robe.

This helps me put rewards into perspective. We believe that when the church is resurrected and rewarded we will individually come before Jesus at His reward seat. He will reward us based on our works and especially the motives for them. The apostle Paul described it thusly:

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

1 Corinthians 3:13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

1 Corinthians 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

1 Corinthians 3:15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The “gold, silver, [and] precious stones” Paul described sound a great deal like the “ornaments” and “jewels” Isaiah said a bride adorns herself with.

I desire rewards in order to be as beautiful as possible for Jesus!

Think of a wedding. It’s really wonderful when the bride emerges in her gown with her hair & face all in order, with just the right adornment. Though from a worldly standpoint we are not materialistic, every bride ought to want to look fantastic for her groom.

Rewards do matter. They represent my pure love for Jesus as His bride. I want everyone in Heaven and on the earth to see how much I owe to my Lord.

Revelation 19:9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

It's clear that there are different groups of human beings involved and that God deals with them differently. The bride, whom we believe to be the saints of the church age, is not "those who are called to the marriage supper."

After the second coming believers from other ages will be resurrected (Daniel 12:2) along with tribulation saints, both mortal and resurrected ones (Revelation 20:4), these will be the invited guest who will be guests at this celebration supper. I believe that the marriage supper will be during the first part of the millennial reign of Christ.

Ladies, we've attempted to break-down certain 'roles' of life that you go through:

1. A woman starts off as a daughter.
2. As she grows towards adulthood she becomes a young unmarried woman.
3. Unless gifted with celibacy she will become a wife.
4. In most cases she will become a mother.
5. Her children grown and gone, she passes into the role of an older woman.
6. At some point in this journey she will arrive home, to Heaven, and be among the bride of Jesus Christ.

It is by learning and loving your roles that you add to your wedding garment. Whatever role you are in right now, when it gets a little tough, just remember you are doing it for that moment you will be face-to-face with your heavenly Bridegroom. You will see Him in all His beauty, in all His loveliness, and you will want to present the most beautiful robe possible.

Guys, without getting weird, its an illustration. You, too, will want to have a super-adorned robe. Think in terms of a kingly robe or the ornate garments of a Jewish high priest instead of a wedding gown - if that preserves your masculinity.

At any rate, we all will appear before Him at His coming to receive what we have coming! Let's load up!