

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

THE MARRIAGE
OF THE LAMB

19:6-10

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The Marriage of the LAMB

Wow! The praise from that last scene was *good!* I hope you have been joining in on the worship as we are journeying through Revelation 19! We are beginning God's *Grand Finale!* It's the culmination of God's oh, so sweet and righteous plan for His glory! He is getting close to putting all things in their places for the duration of eternity, which never ends! So shout out loud and praise Him with all you have in you as we walk through these last few chapters! Listen, and maybe you can hear me! I'm singing and shouting and praising and dancing to our God!

Okay, settle down, Sharon. One scene at a time. Take a long, deep breath and let it out slowly... slowly...

... I'm fine now.

John has been listening to God's heavenly assembly commanding praises to God! Saints and creatures in heaven praise Him in all His grandeur over His judgments of destruction because they are righteous. The precursor to all this spectacular veneration of our God was His destruction of Babylon. I want to ask you a question. Do you praise God for His judgments of ruination, devastation, and death? In our culture and society, including, and maybe especially, in the church, have you been made to feel that God's wrath is a negative, rather than positive? Are you ashamed of His anger? Don't be! Don't *ever be!* Ever! The saints of God are to delight in His wrath and final judgments! They are faithful and righteous! Don't ever forget that! Believe what God, the Creator, says, not what you hear from men, who are only the creation.

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." Revelation 19:6-7

Once again, John hears a sound. He describes it as being *like* the voice of a great multitude and *like* the sound of many waters and the sound of mighty peals of thunder. Whoever, or whatever, John heard, we are blessed with the earthly descriptions he gave us so we could listen to it, too.

In verse 5, all of God's bond-servants, those who fear Him, whether small or significant, are commanded to give Him praise. One thing seems reasonably certain; all of these bond-servants who were commissioned to praise God are certainly participating!

Perhaps more important than figuring out exactly which person, persons, and or groups are involved is the message itself, *"Hallelujah! For the Lord, our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready."* This is the third "Hallelujah!" refrain we have seen in this chapter. The first is in verse one, where God is praised for His salvation, glory, and power because His judgment against the great harlot is faithful and righteous. The second is in verse three, where God is praised, once again, for His ultimate and permanent judgment against Babylon.

This third time, here in verse six, God is praised because He has taken up His throne and is ruling and reigning as the Lord God, the Almighty! He is the King!!! Victory has finally arrived, and heaven feels an adrenaline rush that simply cannot be contained! *Hallelujah!!!*

The grand and majestic message continues and commands all of heaven to rejoice and be glad and glorify God. Why? Because the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready! What a contrast to the filthy harlot is the pure, bright, and clean bride of the Lamb!

Let us rejoice! (*chairo* in Greek) Let us be full of cheer and happiness!

Let us be glad! (*agalliao* in Greek) Let us exult and jump for joy!

Let us give the glory (*doxa* in Greek) to the Lord our God, the Almighty! Let us acknowledge and shout to God that He, and He alone, brought about the marriage and enabled the bride to make herself ready.

The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready! God, in ages past, declared this breathtaking event. Now He has brought it to pass!!! To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority! To God, and God alone, belong every and all praise, from before all things, now, and forever!!!

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 marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:8-10

Before we move on, let's pause and identify our characters:

We know who the Lamb is; we've seen Him over two dozen times thus far in Revelation. We will continue to see Him right through the end of the book (and the beginning of the future of the rest of eternity!). He is the Son of God, the Seed promised back in Genesis

3:15 to bring Life; He is the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David who overcame the world; He is the Lamb who was slain and purchased for God men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation with His blood. He is the One who is worthy to open the book, and when He does, He will release the judgments that are in it. Once He does, they will take place quickly... very quickly.

How about the bride? Who is she? This is the first time we have seen her in the book of Revelation. She is mentioned three more times: Revelation 21:2; Revelation 21:9; Revelation 22:17.

In Revelation 21:2, we see the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down heaven from God. The holy city is described as "made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." In verse 9, one of the seven angels (the angels we saw earlier with the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues) tells John that he wants to show him the bride, the Lamb's wife. What does he show John? The holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven.

Is the bride a city or a people? Well, both really. We will look at it more closely when we get to chapter 21. For now, think of your own town or city in a competition of some kind against a neighboring town. I'll use the name of my own town (you insert your own) in my illustration. I live in Ooltewah, and we are challenging Chattanooga to a donation campaign to help children. Go Ooltewah! Who am I cheering on? A city or people? When I cheer on Ooltewah, I cheer on the individual citizens who make up the town of Ooltewah's. Hopefully, my illustration will get you thinking along the right path.

Let's look at a couple cross-references to clarify who Ooltewah, oops, I mean the *bride*, really is.

First, look at Ephesians 5:22-33. *"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband."

From the above passage, it is clear that Christ has a relationship to the body of Christ, the church, as a man should have to his wife. Christ loved the church and gave Himself

up for her. He nourishes and cherishes her because the members of the church are members of His body. Why does He do this? What is His purpose? So He can sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word. Why does He set her apart to Himself? So that He can present the church to Himself in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; so that He can present her holy and blameless to Himself.

Look at 2 Corinthians 11:2, *"For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."*

The "you" is the church. Paul (the author of both Ephesians and 2 Corinthians) clarifies that the church is betrothed (promised in marriage) to Christ. He is more than concerned about the behavior of the Corinthian church. He exhorts them to be pure and faithful to their betrothed, who will one day be their husband. This is also a great cross-reference to Revelation 19:7, where we are told that the *"bride has made herself ready."*

The very next verse is Revelation 19:8, which is our text at hand. We are told that *"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."* We are told that it was given to the Lamb's bride to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, and then immediately informed that the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. The Greek word used for given is *"didomi"* and means to provide, present, or bestow. The responsibility of acting righteously in everything we do is given, presented, or bestowed to us by our Father and Lord. The ability to act righteously in everything we do is given, granted, or bestowed to us by our Father and Lord. Righteousness, itself, is provided, issued, or presented to us. Anything and everything we do apart from the Holy Spirit is unrighteous. We receive the Holy Spirit when we become part of the body of Christ, the church. It is only "in Him" that we are righteous.

Let's look back, once again, at Revelation 19:7, where it says, *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."* Do you see what we will do when the bride "makes herself ready"? We will rejoice, be glad, and give the glory to Him! We will glorify *Him* because the bride could not make herself ready by herself! *She* couldn't do it at all! Only through the imputed righteousness of Christ, her bridegroom, could we be righteous! Only through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit within us could we perform acts in keeping with godliness! We will give glory to Him at that time because *He has done it!* And we most certainly should be rejoicing *now* and glorifying Him *now* because He is *doing it now!*

Now let's look forward, one last time, to Revelation 19:8. The members of the bride can not ever perform righteous acts in and of themselves. It is only through the work and Spirit of her Bridegroom that she is enabled to "make herself ready" and "clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean." In actuality, the fine linen is bestowed to the bride to clothe herself. It has been made from the righteous acts of the saints which God, Himself, produced in her. The exquisite, bright, and clean linen is woven on the loom of

God. He has created it and presented it to the bride to wear. *All glory to God forever and ever!*

Don't forget, we are only doing an overview of Revelation. I know I have not adequately dealt with the doctrine presented here because of time and space, nor is it my purpose. (However, I deal with this particular subject on my website WORDCenterMinistries.org) Perhaps a cross-reference from Hebrews 13:20-21 will suffice for now. *"Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."*

Okay, then, let's move on.

Verses 6-8 concern a sound or voice that John hears. He describes it as being *"something like the voice a great multitude,"* and *"like the sound of many waters,"* and *"like the sound of mighty peals of thunder."* John doesn't identify the voices. However, in verse 9, John tells us who is speaking to him; it is "he." Thanks, John! Hmmm... Can we identify the "he"? I believe we can. John sees a multi-faceted vision that began in Revelation 17:1. The "he" is the angel who shows John the vision; he is one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls.

The "bowl" angel tells John to write down his words, *"Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."*

Before we address this statement, let's look at Jewish wedding customs, which would have been familiar to John's audience. I have included below a section from one of my books, "HIStory—From Event to Event, the Bible Is One Story—HIS Story!" Besides helping us understand verse 9 more clearly, it will also give us an extra commentary on verses 7-8. It finishes at Revelation 19:9! Precisely where we want to land!

"Jewish weddings and marriage customs in Biblical times can give us a stunning picture of Christ's Bride and her wedding to Him.

In present-day marriages, who usually chooses the bride? The groom, right? In Biblical times that was not the case. The father of the groom handpicked the bride. Jesus is the church's bridegroom, and God is His Father. If you are a believer, God chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4. God, the Father chose those that would come into the church. God, the Father selected the bride for His Son, Jesus Christ. Think about the magnitude of this. If you are saved, you have been chosen to be the bride of the Son of the Creator. Wow!

When the Jewish father chose the bride for his son, a binding wedding agreement took place. Two cups of wine were sipped while the bride and bridegroom's arms were intertwined with one another. The unmistakable portrayal was two persons becoming one!

The closest thing we have to this agreement would be an engagement. The groom gives the bride an engagement ring after she accepts his proposal. Our present-day marriage engagements, however, are not entirely binding. Either party can break the engagement. In biblical times, however, to be betrothed or engaged was almost as weighty as the covenant agreement of marriage. To be released from it would require a bill of divorcement. One had to be divorced legally from a betrothal.

Paul betrothed the church at Corinth to Christ as a pure virgin. Paul tells us the marriage has not yet been consummated, and in the meantime, they need to be utterly devoted to Christ. He was afraid they might slip away and have an affair with the world. 2 Corinthians 11:2-15

You, as a Christian, are betrothed to Christ right now! But there is a period in which you are waiting for your bridegroom to come and get you. During this time, false teachers, false apostles, and dark angels disguised as angels of light will teach and preach false doctrine and a false gospel to get you to turn away from your devotion to Christ.

As Christians, the world and its ways are "under the ban" to us. We belong to Christ! There is much temptation during our wait. If we are friends with the world, we are adulteresses. James 4:4 The Greek word points to the feminine gender. In God's eyes, whether we are male or female, we are the bride (feminine gender) of Christ, our bridegroom (masculine gender). If believers become friends with the world, they are adulteresses, whether they are men or women!

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11 that it was he who betrothed the Corinthians to Christ. This made complete sense to the Jews of that day. Many times, after the father would choose the bride for his son, he would send a trusted servant to go and offer his agreement of marriage. That was Paul's job. Paul was the Master's servant! He came and presented the Corinthians with a covenant contract, and they accepted!

Usually, there were witnesses present to make the agreement binding. We follow this practice in present-day wedding ceremonies. States require witnesses to sign marriage certificates. But do you realize what the invited guests are at a wedding? They are witnesses; witnesses of the binding agreement that the couple enters into. Do you know that every time you go to a wedding, it makes you a witness before God?

When you hear that the couple is having marital problems, possibly one is thinking of leaving, you don't have the option to hide your head in the sand! You are a witness, and you are obligated to hold that couple accountable to the vows they took before God in your presence! It doesn't even matter if they are believers or not. Marriage is an institution for believers and unbelievers, a sign of what God's family relationship is like, a picture of what God offers us. When you go to a wedding, remember, you are a witness before the Lord, and you have a responsibility!

Promises were made at the betrothal. We make promises at the wedding ceremony itself. Perhaps we don't think our commitment becomes serious until the wedding. Just like many so-called Christians don't think their time here on earth is all that serious. They don't consider their actions as being adultery against Jesus. The Jews realized their commitment was consequential, beginning with the betrothal!

There was a token given at the betrothal. We still do that today by giving a ring as a token of our intention to eventually wed. These tokens weren't always given to the bride. Sometimes they were from family to family.

There was usually at least one year between the betrothal and the wedding. The reason was that both the bride and the bridegroom had preparations to make.

The bride had to prepare herself for her bridegroom. She worked on her hair, skin, nails, and skills, she accumulated her dowry from her relatives, and she worked on her wedding garment with her family. She would sew it and prepare it so that when the bridegroom came to get her, she would be ready! And guess what? She didn't know when he would come! Do we know when our bridegroom will come and get us?

So how do we prepare our wedding garment? How can we, as the bride, ready ourselves for His coming? He has told us what to do in Revelation 19:7-8. It has been given to us to clothe ourselves in righteous acts. As saints, holy ones, those set apart unto Christ, we are to do the will of the Father through the Holy Spirit's power, which will result in our being clothed in fine linen, bright and clean. The fine linen is woven with threads of righteous deeds.

When we consider that our wedding garment will be made out of our righteous deeds and that all of our worthless deeds will be burned, we gain insight into what God means when He warns us to not be found naked!

The bridegroom prepared a place for his bride in his father's house. John 14:2-3 Since he would be adding to the family that would dwell in the home, he would build an addition on to his father's existing house. There he and his bride would live as part of the father's family. The son was the one who would construct the addition, not the father. Yet, the father would oversee the work, and it was he who would determine when it was time for the son to go get his bride. When the bride came home to be part of the father's house, she was his child.

Even Jesus doesn't know the time or hour when He will return to get us. Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32 Only His Father does. God will tell Jesus when to come and get us. In the meantime, Jesus is preparing a mansion for us in His Father's house!

At the father's appointed time, he sent his son to the home of the bride. The bridegroom, his attendants, and his friends went to the bride's house where she and her attendants were waiting. We still have attendants in present-day wedding ceremonies. The bride and her wedding garment needed to be ready because she didn't know when he was coming. It usually took place near midnight. This is why the virgins in the parable needed lamps! Matthew 25:1-12. The virgins in the parable were the attendants of the bride.

The bridegroom would not knock on the door. He would stand outside of the bride's yard. Guess how she would know he was out there? He announced with a trumpet that he was there! He was calling her to come and be with him! When she heard the trumpet's sound, she and her attendants ran out to meet him outside of her home. Are you beginning to see the grand

ceremony that will bring so much glory to the family of God? The voice of the archangel and the sound of the trumpet will permeate the heavens. Jesus will come in the clouds, and we will be raised up to meet Him in the air! 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Once the groom called his bride to be with him, the ceremonies would continue with the wedding procession. The groom would lead all the guests to his home through the streets of the city. On the way home, people joined in the celebration, and there was jubilation and instruments and shouts and dancing in the streets. The procession literally became a parade.

The bride and groom were placed under a canopy where that most important part of the ceremony, the joining of the couple, would take place. When does that take place for the church? Where will our "canopy" be? Jesus will take us with Him in the cloud back to heaven to the Father's mansion. Most likely, the actual wedding will take place there.

After the wedding ceremony, guests were invited to the marriage supper, or feast. It was the bridegroom's father who hosted the wedding, not the bride's parents, so it is the father of the bridegroom, not the bride or her parents who invite guests to the marriage supper. Having entered into a covenant with her husband, the wife was brought home. The marriage supper celebration began, usually lasting three to seven days, becoming increasingly more jubilant and vibrant as the days went on. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb! Revelation 19:9"

Okay, we are back at Revelation 19:9; right where we want to be! Let's look again at the first part of verse 9. *"Then he said to me, 'Write, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."'*" From the article, did you notice that the wedding and the wedding supper are actually two different rituals? We are betrothed to the Lamb now (those who are saved); when He comes to get His church (the rapture), the wedding will take place (The Lamb and His bride, the church, will be married.) This will take place in heaven. But the marriage *supper* takes place later, usually after seven days. So, there is a possibility that the marriage supper might take place on earth.

We know those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb are blessed. The Greek word for blessed is *"makarios"* and means extremely blessed and well off. But, here's an interesting question. *Who* will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb? Who are those who are incredibly blessed?

It is strange to think of the bride being "invited" to the marriage supper, isn't it? The Greek word for invited is *"kaleo"* and has a different meaning than what we usually think of as an invitation to an event, where we can choose to go or not. The word *"kaleo"* means to call and has the idea of being sent for or summoned. Those who are drawn to the Lamb's marriage supper have been given a high privilege and honor. That sort of changes things, doesn't it? While it is true that a bride usually would not be invited to her own marriage supper, it is also true that in the case of the marriage supper of the Lamb, it is the Father who is doing the inviting or calling. Those whom He summons will come, and they are incredibly blessed!

Are others invited? Who else will be summoned? Think with me for a moment. Who are the believing Jews? They are the wife of God. Will they be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb? What about the sheep from Matthew 25:32-46; the righteous nations the King of Glory will separate from the goats (the unrighteous nations) when He comes to defeat the antichrist? What about the Old Testament saints who are in Abraham's bosom until the second resurrection? What about the 144,000 Israelites who witness on the earth before the coming of Christ? What about the 2 witnesses in Jerusalem? What about the four living creatures and all the heavenly hosts? (There are more groups, but I think I see some of you lying on the ground having fainted from information overload, so I'll stop.) Some of the above may be invited to the marriage supper, while others may not.

The reason I'm even bringing this up is to get you thinking. At this point, I've introduced you to more groups that you probably know what to do with. As you continue to study God's Word, book after book, all these (and more) will be placed into God's plan right before your eyes. It will all make sense, and it will bring Him His intended glory! I encourage you to keep diligently studying right up until He comes!

The truth about the marriage supper is that most people just automatically assume that the Lord and the bride are present, and that's it, no one else. It's that same old mentality which believes the whole Bible is about the church, God is all about the church, Jesus is all about the church, the Holy Spirit is all about the church, *everything* is all about the church. Friends, this is simply not true.

How much of the church has been in Revelation so far? Basically, chapters 2-3 plus a couple hints of the church here and there, as in the passage we are looking at right now. Although the entire Bible is written for everyone, most of it is written *to the Jews*, not *to the church*. All of the Old Testament and almost half of the New Testament are written directly to the Jews. Who were the gospels written to? The Jews. The first 8 chapters of Acts is written to the Jews. The remainder of the book of Acts, along with the Epistles, were written to the churches. The church is made up of both *Jew and Gentile*.

Israel is the apple of God's eye. She is a special treasure to Him. The church is a precious, priceless pearl whom He buys by selling all that He has. But the church was only invited in because His unique treasure rejected Him. God sent salvation to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. It's a Jewish book, and we need to read it listening as a Jew would.

The angel, after telling John to write down the words, "*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb*," now declares, "*These are true words of God*." The angel announces the message is straight from God, there is nothing hidden, they are not just true words, but they are truth, even as God, Himself, is truth.

We are told in Revelation 19:10, *"Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

John understood that the words the angel spoke came directly from, and belonged to, God. He knew the importance of the words from the angel was just as if it was God who was speaking to him. John's reaction was immediate but wrong. He was thinking with all his heart, but not much of his head. His illogical conclusion was to fall at the angel's feet and worship him. The angel quickly rectified John's error by ordering him to stop! He reminded John that he was God's servant, just like John and the rest of the brethren who held the testimony of Jesus. Then the angel commanded John to worship God!

The angel explained to John that the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of prophecy. Speaking and proclaiming what Jesus spoke and did is the spirit, or essence, of speaking for God. That's what prophecy really is; it is speaking for God. Forth telling (or telling forth) the words of God. Witnessing or testifying about Jesus' life and words is the intrinsic nature of prophecy.

To hold the testimony of Jesus is to own it, to possess it, to proclaim it and to explain it; it is to embrace Jesus, His life, His words, His Truth until death.

Regrettably, in our present church culture, most people do not personally give the testimony of Jesus to others. Instead, unbelievers (at most) are given a casual invite to come to church. At church, the "pastors" will speak to believers, unbelievers, or both. Many believe they are handling both groups well, but the harvest shows this conclusion to be false.

I am always fascinated by the question, "Why are most young people leaving the church today?" I've heard all sorts of answers, but not the biblical one. The answer is twofold.

- A. Because most people in churches are not saved.
- B. Because most churches and shepherds are false.

Hang on! Don't faint! This is precisely how Jesus told us it would be. He told us there would be few, not many. We have forgotten what He said and listened to what men are saying instead.

True believers will always hold to the testimony of Jesus and gather together with other believers. False believers will attend church, perhaps, but leave when the going gets uncomfortable, like when they are bored, or the message makes them uncomfortable, or just whenever their ears need a little tickling.

I applaud all true shepherds, those who are not hirelings, but are willing to speak God's words to his flock (no matter the audience, no matter the reaction). A faithful pastor is regularly and personally in touch with his flock. He will edify them with God's word and train them to go out and do the same in the spheres of their own lives. In doing so, he

will recognize those who are not part of Jesus' flock and will do what is necessary to truly bring them in; he will explain the true gospel, the testimony of Jesus in the Bible, urging them to believe, repent, follow, and obey.

The church's assembly is for believers, not unbelievers; it is to build up the real body of Christ so it can go out and do God's work in the world. That is not to say an unbeliever *can not come* to church, rather unbelievers should be the exception, not the rule. *Please hear me.* I am not saying you should never invite an unbeliever to church, but if you do, you need to spend as much time as possible with them before and afterward to explain what they witnessed and heard. *You* need to be the carrier of the gospel to those God brings into your life; *you* need to hold and share the testimony of Jesus with them, not relying on pastors to do *your* job.

Church marquees across the country welcome anyone and everyone to church. Why not instead, welcome them to a unique service that can truly meet the unbeliever's needs? Love on them, get to know them, teach them from the Bible knee to knee and give them the gospel. If they bow their knee to their God, then the church has a new babe in Christ! Praise the Lord!

And if they refuse His Son, then invite them back to another unique service (or meet with them personally, if appropriate) and repeat the process, over and over again, teaching them more and more of God's Word. If they eventually do not return, leave them in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Jesus will not lose even one of those the Father has given to Him. *"But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."* John 10:27-29

Doing things as God has prescribed in His Word will enable the pastor to do his job correctly when he preaches and teaches the assembly. The shepherd is to shepherd the flock, feed them, equip them, build them up to actually hold to the testimony of Jesus as they go back into the world.

We have an excess of unbelievers in the pews because a false gospel is so often given. They are not convicted of their standing before the Most Holy God; instead, they feel comfortable "knowing" that God loves them and will not harm them in any way, and believe He will turn their painful lives around so they can be happy. They are not warned about the wrath to come on all ungodliness and all unrighteousness. They do not know they are in eternal danger. Instead, they are made to feel comfortable and secure, they are told to "feel the love" around them. Refusing to warn someone of danger is not love at all; it makes the church an accessory to murder.

The horrific, heart-rending result is a harvest of false believers that are not part of Christ's pure body. They are not fed, equipped, or built up to actually hold to the

testimony of Jesus, nor do they have the Holy Spirit to guide them in giving the truth to others.

My friends, things ought not to be this way! It is our commission to extend the invitation, the call of God, to unbelievers. It is our responsibility to take them to His Word and explain it to them.

I have to wonder how high the number will be... the number of church-goers who will never attend the marriage supper of the Lamb...

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" Matthew 7:21–23