

Catford Lectures 2008-2009

Part 9

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Place	Catford
Date	01.11.2008
Duration	01:01:55
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/ccl001/catford-lectures-2008-2009

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[00:00:00] 330. What raised the wondrous thought, or who does it suggest, that we, the Church, to glory brought, should with the Son be blessed? O God, the thought was Thine.

Thine only it could mean.

[00:01:25] Breath of the Wisdom of Divine, make pure our hearts to live.

Portion of our heart and mind, for us to grow shall be.

Great was Thou strength, could ever find, Thine only it could be.

[00:02:17] Lamb of God, take this my word, that lamb of God shall die.

Blissful was Thou, Lord of His birth, in glory bright to shine.

O God, with great delight, Thine wondrous hope we see.

[00:03:07] Upon His throne, in glory bright, the light of Christ shall be.

Still with the Holy Ghost, we triumph in that love.

Thy wondrous thought has made our vows, glory with Christ the Lord.

[00:04:03] We ask this in His name. Amen.

I'd like to read five portions with you this afternoon. Two in the Old Testament in the book of Genesis, and three rather shorter in the New Testament. Could we start, please, by reading a few verses in Genesis chapter 2.

Verse 8, the second chapter of Genesis and verse 8.

And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Now drop down, please, to verse 18. [00:05:01] And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him and help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found and help meet for him.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof. [00:06:01] And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. Now Genesis 24, please.

Verses 7 and 8. 24th chapter of Genesis, verses 7 and 8.

The Lord Abram is speaking, the Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house [00:07:02] and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me and that swear unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land. He shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this thy oath. Only bring not my son thither again.

Down to verse 51.

Reading verses 51 to 58.

Behold, Rebekah is before thee.

Take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken. [00:08:05] And it came to pass that when Abram's servant heard their words, he worshipped the Lord, abowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah.

He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night. And they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten.

After that she shall go.

And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prepared my way. Send me away, that I may go to my master. [00:09:03] And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And

they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

Verse 61 And Rebekah arose, and her damsels. And they rode upon the camels, and followed the man. And the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lehiroi, for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. [00:10:04] For she had said unto the servant, What man is this, that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master.

Therefore she took a veil, and covered herself.

And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. And took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. Now, in the New Testament, three scriptures, quite short.

The first one in the second epistle to the Corinthians. The second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 11, just verses 2 and 3.

[00:11:14] The apostle is writing to the assembly in Corinth, and to all the saints in Achaia. For I am jealous over you, with godly jealousy.

For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Ephesians chapter 5, [00:12:06] verses 25 to 32.

Ephesians 5, verses 25 to 32.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself, a glorious church. Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

But that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh. [00:13:03] But nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they too shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery.

But I speak concerning Christ and the church. Finally, in the Revelation, chapter 19, verses 5 to 9.

Revelation 19, verses 5 to 9.

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, [00:14:05] Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called [00:15:01] unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith

unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Thus far, the word of God.

There won't be any surprise to you if I say that the thought I have before me tonight is the bride of Christ. Now, that's a vast subject, and we cannot deal with it all. But what I do want to speak about is God's purpose in the assembly. The scriptures that we've read give us a fairly clear indication, a very clear indication, I think, of what that is. God's purpose in the assembly. I'm not going to be looking at the bride herself particularly, [00:16:01] although that may come into it as we go along. But my thought is God's side of things rather than ours, although we cannot leave that out altogether. If you want to know what the bride of Christ is like, study the 21st chapter of Revelation and the first five verses of chapter 22. We're not going there this afternoon. There was an address on that given from this platform April 2006 by our brother Jeffrey Brett. He spoke on the bride of Christ and the effect of what she's going to be then on what she should be now in the interim. I'm sure that if anyone missed that lecture, tapes or recordings will be available.

We read, first of all, from the second chapter of Genesis, which gives us a pattern.

[00:17:07] You say, well, how can you apply this to the church? It doesn't mention the church in the second of Genesis or the 24th if it comes to that. Why are you linking this with the church? Well, the very fact that in the scripture we read in Ephesians that Paul quotes so fully from the passage we read here, I think entitles us to apply this pattern that we have in the second of Genesis as being a pattern of the church, the bride of Christ. Let's set the scene, first of all. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. This was a paradise.

Eden means paradise.

And you would find it very profitable to look up the mentions of paradise in the Scriptures and link them together. [00:18:02] But this was what God created in this world for His pleasure. And it's planted eastward.

Planted eastward, looking towards the sun rising. And that surely reminds us that it was planted for the glory of God. The heavens declare the glory of the Lord.

The glory of God comes from the east. And in a coming day, in a millennial day, when the glory of God returns to His temple here in this world, the glory comes from the east. And so here it is. This garden, this pleasure ground, this paradise that was planted here in this world was not only for man's pleasure and man's fulfillment, it was for God's glory.

[00:19:03] And He provided in this paradise absolutely everything that was needful. The creation is really described in chapter 1, but chapter 2 fills in the detail of it. You get Adam and you get Eve, both created in chapter 1, but this gives us a little bit better understanding, not better, I shouldn't use that word, a little fuller understanding of what was involved.

There was everything here by way of food. There was a river which divided into four and would provide irrigation for the whole world.

And God's thoughts of blessing have always been for the whole world. Now there is a particular

portion for the church and it's that that we're going to look at this afternoon, but don't let's ever forget that God's provision of blessing gives you a universal blessing.

[00:20:03] And that's going to be seen, not only in the millennium, but in the new creation.

But we come to verse 18.

And God said, it is not good that man should be alone. There was Adam, he had everything that he needed. He was in charge, we might say.

God brought the animals to him and whatever name Adam gave them, that was their name. And that had God's authority.

Adam was able to do that, but amongst all those creatures, there was nothing that could really respond to Adam, intellectually, physically, or emotionally. There was nothing there that was a help meet for him. And it was God who said that, Adam didn't say it. [00:21:03] Adam didn't say, I would rather like to have somebody to share. No. God said it is not good for man to be alone. Now, we can understand that if we're speaking about Adam. We struggle to understand it if we're thinking about the Lord and his church. We just take it that in the purpose of God, he wanted for the Lord Jesus Christ to have by his side in eternity one who was fit to occupy a place with him.

We know, of course, from scriptures like, his delights were with the sons of men. We know that that thought was ever there from eternity past. But here's a nice picture of what it is and what it meant to Adam. And God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam. [00:22:05] And while he was in that deep sleep, he took a bone out of him, a rib, and he made it into a woman and brought her unto the man.

Can you imagine what Adam thought when God brought Eve to him, which he did?

But you see, Adam had first to fall into a deep sleep. And this surely is the picture of the Lord Jesus giving himself for the church, of which we read in Ephesians 5, we'll come to that. That deep sleep was needful, that the woman could be taken out of the man and that there could be a help meet for him. And there she was in all her beauty, in all her purity, in all her perfection. [00:23:01] And God brought her to Adam. And this is just a picture in innocence. This is just a picture of what we have in Revelation 19 when the church, the assembly, and all its perfection at that time is going to be brought to Christ.

It's not our purpose this afternoon to speak about family relationships, but here in verse 24 is God's basis for the family.

We cannot pass over that verse without just saying that. God's basis for the family. A man and a woman, and the man leaves his father and mother. Now, those words of course stretch forward. Adam never had a father, did he? But those words stretch forward. This is God's basis of marriage. A man shall leave his father and mother [00:24:03] and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh. Words that we read again in the epistle to the Ephesians. God's basis for marriage. It means, it implies, doesn't it, that you get another family unit, that the man and the woman are another family unit. And that also implies that marriage is for adults.

Let's pass on to chapter 24.

Chapter 24.

We read what were really Abram's instructions to his servant, who we know from another chapter was called Eliezer, although I don't think he's named in this one. But we know he was called Eliezer. And God gave Adam, Abraham, I'm sorry, Abraham, [00:25:02] gave his servant very clear directions. What is the meaning of that, those verses 7 and 8?

The bride for Isaac. This is what's involved. A bride for Isaac.

And a bride from Canaan where Abram and Isaac were living wouldn't do. No, it must come from Abram's kindred.

So the servant is sent back to Mesopotamia to take a bride.

Why? Why? Because this involves the idea of calling. This involves the idea of blessing. Those who lived in Canaan were descended from Ham. And Ham received a curse.

Genesis chapter 9. Whereas Shem received a blessing. [00:26:02] And Abram and all Abram's family including his brothers, including Terah his father, they're all descended from Shem. And the bride for Isaac must come from the tribe of Shem.

From the tribe that had been blessed. And the bride for Christ must be one who has been blessed.

This world has nothing to offer.

It brings in the thought of the calling and the blessing of the bride of Christ. That is why when we read Ephesians 1 verse 3, we read that we're blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Never underestimate the height of the blessings into which we're brought. [00:27:03] Both individually and as part of the bride of Christ. That's the first point. There is the calling of the bride. The second point is that Isaac must not go back. Isaac had been received as it were from the dead in figure. And Isaac must not go back to that place where they had come from. And this surely is just a picture of the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has been here once in this world. He has been down into the depths of death. He's risen again.

And when he said, I will build my church, it's not that he's coming back now to build it. The Holy Spirit is doing it. He's carrying on that work even now. And surely Eliezer, Abram's servant, is a very vivid picture of the Holy Spirit in what he says and what he does. Because if you read this, we didn't have time to read the chapter all through, [00:28:03] but if you read it all through, you see that Eliezer speaks and acts as Abram would if Abram had been there himself.

He acts with absolute authority.

Of course, the Holy Spirit is not a servant. The Holy Spirit is God, but that presses the likeness even further because we read in Romans 8 towards the end, God knows the mind of the Spirit.

Not the Spirit knows the mind of God, but God knows the mind of Spirit, of the Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is God. And everything that he does, he does as God. And he is working in the world today, drawing out and building Christ's church. Well, in Genesis 24, we get the picture. [00:29:02] We

see that all persons of the Godhead are involved in this picture.

There's Abram, there's Isaac, and there is the servant. We can see these three standing for pictures of the Godhead, three persons in one. When we come to verse 53, the bride must be brought into a suitable condition for Isaac.

The servant brings forth jewels, their gifts, jewels of silver, jewels of gold and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah.

Now, there is a meaning to all these things, which we'll look at in a minute. But this, I think, constitutes a betrothal. This isn't marriage yet.

[00:30:01] This is a betrothal.

And this corresponds to the state that the bride of Christ is in at the moment. It was customary in those days, it was in the days of the children of Israel, and no doubt it was beforehand, for gifts to be given.

And the gift of silver or something like that would mark the betrothal of the woman to the man. But, of course, these things have a spiritual meaning too.

Jewels of silver, of course, makes us think of redemption. The redemption money, Exodus 30, verses 11 to 16.

And the bride of Christ has been purchased with a price. Not with corruptible things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, [00:31:04] as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Yes, the price has been paid in full, never needs to be paid again. Can I just pause at this point?

I've been speaking as though we all know the power of the saving blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, but I wonder if that's a wise assumption. Can I just say that if you put your faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary, faith in God and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and his finished work, you will be saved. There is redemption for all who put their trust in that finished work of Calvary. The shed blood figured by the jewels of silver. [00:32:05] There are jewels of gold, now that speaks of divine righteousness. Because we're brought, when we're saved, we're brought into a state where we're fit for God. We are made righteous in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a scripture that I pause every time I read it, it's so vivid. He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made, what? The righteousness of God in him. And you and I are endowed with the righteousness of God the moment we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, but she had raiment given her. Raiment, of course, speaks of, I suppose, garments of salvation. But I think it may also mean, as a little stage further, putting on Christ.

[00:33:09] Putting on Christ. Romans 13, verse 14.

Not only do we accept salvation, but there should come a point in our Christian lives where we put on Christ. Not only was Rebecca given these things as a mark of the betrothal between her and Isaac, but the family also were given precious things. And I really believe, and I'll say that from this platform, that I really believe that the families of believers are often blessed. They often receive blessings that perhaps they do not know the source of. God is gracious, and God can give to the family precious

things. He did here, and so it is for the believer. [00:34:03] Well now, so here is Rebecca. She is what we would call today, she is engaged. What next?

Well, no doubt in those days, certainly it was the case among the Jews later and among Middle Eastern nations generally, there was normally a fair length of time between the engagement and the actual marriage itself. That's not a strange idea to us today, is it? There usually is. I think, it's a long time ago, but I think we're engaged for about a year, Margaret and I, because financial things come into it, and there are all kinds of things. But it was normal perhaps for the engagement to last a little while before the marriage itself. And so I think the request of the family, let Rebecca stay here 10 months, 10 days, 10 months, 10 years, whatever, [00:35:08] it was not altogether surprising from a human point of view. But the servant, he wanted to complete his business. And so they asked Rebecca, what do you say? And she says, I'll go. Isn't that a remarkable case of faith? This young woman who'd heard about Isaac, but all she had really to go on was the word of this one man, previously a stranger to her, and she says, I will go. But what an example this is to us, isn't it, of faith. Because you see, for us, when we come to the Lord Jesus Christ, now the wedding, the marriage supper of the Lamb is a little way ahead yet, we're not there yet. [00:36:03] But for us, what we have is the wilderness journey. And this is where we should be occupying ourselves, traveling through the wilderness of this world, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and thinking of the things of Christ. The Mesopotamia should have no more attraction for us. We are physically in it, it's true. But we have to leave it behind and set out on that journey, indwelt by the Holy Spirit who dwells in each believer and in the assembly, on that journey to meet the bridegroom. Rebecca has no doubt, and she sets out.

At the conclusion, Isaac is waiting. Rebecca takes a veil and covers herself. But Isaac is waiting.

[00:37:02] And Isaac is a study, we haven't time to talk about Isaac, but Isaac is a study in himself. If you want to know about sonship, study the life of Isaac. And just one thing to point out here, here he is by the well Lehi-Roy. And in the next chapter, years afterwards, he's still living there by that well. And the name of the well means the name of the one who lives and who sees me. Now that is the position of sonship. Living in the light of the presence of God.

The one who lives and who sees me. That's where Isaac lived.

I just want to note before we move to the New Testament, that Isaac loved Rebecca.

You probably all know that that is the second mention of love in the scripture. [00:38:04] The first one is the love of Abraham for Isaac. The love of the father for the son. And here is the love of, pictured, the love of Christ for his church. Now the source is the love of the father for his son. Now that's another subject. But it is true that our blessings come to us because, in the first instance, because of the love of the father for the son. And then we get the fact that Christ loved his church. But before we go into Ephesians, let's just look for a moment at that scripture we read in 2 Corinthians 11. I said that we're moving away from types now. That we're moving into reality, into our own position only.

And I said that we are, as it were, in the time of betrothal. [00:39:03] And this is the figure that the apostle takes up in writing to the Corinthians and to the saints in Achaia. Now I say that, it sounds long-winded, but that is how the epistle is addressed. And it gives me confidence to say that these things apply to us not only in a general way, as part of the assembly of Christ, but to us individually. And we each have to take note of these injunctions. The apostle says, I am jealous, with a godly jealousy. I have espoused you to one husband, and I present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

That is the objective. That as Eve was brought in all her innocence and purity to Adam, so the assembly, in all its redeemed purity, [00:40:04] is going to be brought to Christ. And this is the desire of the apostle, that these things might be a reality. The purity of the assembly might be maintained.

And his fear is that they could be spoilt by deception.

Satan is always anxious to deceive.

He deceived our earliest parents that he hasn't changed his tactics. He distorts.

He may not deny something God has said, but he will do his best to either leave a part out or to add a bit to distort it in some way. And the apostle is anxious lest any of them should be beguiled [00:41:04] through the wiliness of Satan.

Satan has always sought to spoil God's fair creation, and that is his objective still. And if he can stumble you or me and turn us aside from the pathway of faith or give us some strange and erroneous idea about the Lord Jesus and about what he wants from us, he will have achieved his objective.

A solemn warning, these two verses. We can be led astray in doctrine. We can be led astray in affection.

The affection that should be in our hearts by way of response to the Lord Jesus and his great love to us.

Now, if Satan can get us to doubt that love, [00:42:01] he's again achieved his objective.

If he can get us to doubt that Christ loves us, he loved us, gave himself for us, and he loves us today and will love us forever. And if he can get us to doubt that all things work together for those who love God, then he's achieved his objective. And the warning here is plain. Now, we must go on to Ephesians. The time is running away. I think we started promptly, but the clock goes faster. Now, in Ephesians, again, here, it's the church I'm going to speak about. There's much that we can talk about in Ephesians chapter 5 to do with family relationships, which doubtless would be profitable. But we must leave that, otherwise we shan't finish. In any event, I think it's a subject that needs taking up [00:43:02] and it needs taking up seriously, honestly, by those who know that of which they speak and by those who live practical lives that enable them to minister on this topic. I'm sorry, I'm going to say this.

You know, as brethren, we talk a lot about impersonal things and we love to talk about assembly things and assembly truth, and quite right too. I won't hear a word said against it. But if we have a fault, I think we've been a little bit remiss in our teaching on family relationships, what a Christian marriage is, what a Christian family is, and how each person fits into the family and fits into the assembly. But not this afternoon. Now, we speak of Christ and the church. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. [00:44:01] I've said this several times already, but do we understand that that love came first?

Just as when a man asks a woman to marry her, it is to be hoped that he loves her before he asks her. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. That love, it was, which was in his heart, that

moved him, that caused him to give himself.

We read of God loving the world. We read of Christ loving his own, John 13, verse 1. And we read of him loving the assembly. Now, this love caused him to give himself, that is, completely and fully.

This answers to the deep sleep that Adam passed through. The Lord Jesus Christ went through death in reality. [00:45:02] He plumbed death to its very depths.

He yielded up himself upon the cross.

He gave himself for it.

He might sanctify it and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. There are two things there. One is past, one is present. He has sanctified it. He's put it aside for himself. But then there is that daily washing. You might call it sanctifying, but let's be clear that it is sanctified once and for all. And then there is the daily washing of water by the word. Now again, this is an individual truth as well as a collective truth. It's speaking here of the assembly, but if you are part of that assembly, [00:46:01] then he does this for you too individually. The washing of water by the word, the cleansing, the removal of everything that is defiling, everything that would offend, everything that's out of keeping.

And that's a daily process. Corresponds to the washing of the feet, I suppose, in John chapter 13.

But he has an object in view in all this doing that he might present it to himself. A glorious church.

Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

This is speaking of the time when he presents it to himself. [00:47:05] But earlier in this epistle, there is a reference, of course, to the church growing up unto him in all things.

When will that be? Well, I think the thing here is in verse 27 that he might present it to himself, a glorious church. And this is what he will do. This is what he will do when we come to the marriage supper of the Lamb. But what is the condition now?

If Christ is undertaking all this work on our behalf, shouldn't we be in a state that corresponds to what he is doing?

His objective is that he might be able to present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy [00:48:04] and without blemish.

The closing verses of the chapter we perhaps don't need to spend too much time on because we have mentioned already that we are members of the body of Christ. We are bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh. We sang that in the opening hymn. That wasn't just something the hymn writer thought up. It's clear in the scripture. It's difficult for our human minds to understand it, but it is true that we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. That is, we are made the same as he is in the sight of God.

Difficult to understand? We don't need to understand it. We need to accept it as the truth of the word of God. [00:49:04] For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and here we have it again. And

the apostle says this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. There is a double meaning in this passage, as we said at the start. It does have a practical application to Christian families, but it's also a picture of Christ and his assembly and how wonderful it is that God the Holy Spirit, in causing this word to be written, could actually use the institution of marriage set up by God as a picture of the assembly and his church. It's difficult to speak of one without speaking of the other, but we have to distinguish what refers to the assembly of Christ. Now let's turn for the last few minutes to Revelation.

[00:50:08] Not very much said about the marriage supper of the Lamb.

There are only a few verses. As I said at the outset, if we want to know about the bride of Christ, what is she like, we turn to Revelation 21. But here she is in a fit condition to be presented to the Lord Jesus Christ.

At this point, this is not now, this is after the rapture of the church. First thing to happen is that the Lord is going to take all his own to be with himself in the glory.

After that comes the judgment seat of Christ where you and I will stand before him, [00:51:01] not to be judged for our sins, but to receive his assessment of our life.

I remember our brother, Mr. Fred Petman, who's been with the Lord a good many years now, used to say, you and I will be glad that that is so, that everything is cleared before we enter into the joyful presence of the Lord Jesus. There'll be nothing to be brought up again. It's all been gone through, it's all been settled. And we will be at ease in his sight. And we shall be at ease. And everything, I think it's not only individual sins we've committed, I think it's the course of our life that will be gone through. What has the course of my life been? How much has been for Christ? And how much for myself? Where have I given my attention, my talents, my energies such as they are? These are the things that will be gone through at that judgment seat [00:52:01] and they will be settled before we enter into the joy of the Lord. That will have happened. There will have been many things happening on this earth. There will have been judgments. There will have been judgments poured out on the earth, the seals, the trumpets, the vials poured out. All these things have taken place on this earth. And something else has just taken place at this point and that is the judgment of that which is false in the professing church. And Revelation 17 and 18 are taken up very largely with the judgment of something referred to as Babylon. Not quite the same as the Babylon of Genesis chapter 11, but a false professing worldly company [00:53:04] that has nothing whatever, has no correspondence at all with the true bride of Christ. And at the beginning of chapter 19, the false church, and I call it the false church for want of a better name, call it Babylon if you like, it has been judged.

And this means that the way is now open for worship.

And verse 4, the living creatures and the 4 and 20 elders fall down and worship God that sat on the throne of men. Hallelujah! And praise God all ye His servants and ye that fear Him both small and great. And in verse 6 we learn that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Every enemy has been put down.

The false church Babylon has been judged. [00:54:02] Now the way is open for God to take up His power and to reign over this world which He will do through the Lord Jesus Christ. But first, first there must be the marriage supper of the Lamb. The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made

herself ready.

I think that refers to the process I've just spoken of. The judgment seat of Christ.

The wife, the bride, the wife is now ready. There's no hindrance now.

And she's going to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. And that represents the righteousnesses of saints. I think this takes us a stage beyond the fine linen that we had in Genesis 24. That is all there as well. Fitness because of the redemption that is ours. [00:55:03] The garments of salvation. Putting on Christ. That is all there. But here is something else now that can appear for the first time. Our own righteousnesses.

And that is counted as fine linen.

And so, the bride here is presented.

And the marriage supper of the Lamb can take place.

We don't get a description of it exactly. But we are told that blessed are they who are called to it. That's not the bride. They are the guests. Those who look on with a loving interest. And these are the true sayings of God.

Others will see the marriage supper. And the marriage supper of the Lamb is an answer to all the Lord's work on earth. He is going to have for himself a bride in glory. [00:56:04] One fit to be with him.

One without spot, blemish, any such thing. One by his side forever.

In time and in eternity.

The first eight verses of Revelation 21 speak of the bride in her eternal state. And she's still referred to as a bride. But during the following verses, where it says in verse 9, come and see the bride, the Lamb's wife. That is at the outset of the millennial age. Unchanging. Unchanging.

This is the bride of Christ. One fit to be with him. Well now, the midnight cry has gone out. Behold the Bridegroom.

Go ye forth to meet him.

[00:57:02] How does this call of the Holy Spirit appeal to our hearts?

And how does it affect our response to the Lord Jesus Christ? Behold the Bridegroom.

Right, we'll sing a closing hymn.

I hope there are some French people here The audience, number 498, verses 2, 3 and 4.

Thee shall we contemplate, gaze on thy face adoring, Saviour and Bridegroom Lord, beauty supreme above.

Verses 2, 3 and 4 only, 498.

[00:58:05] Thee shall we contemplate, gaze on thy face adoring, Saviour and Bridegroom Lord, beauty supreme above.

Sound in the silence, measureless voice exploring, heights of thy fearless grace, depths of thy boundless love.

Heights of thy fearless grace, [00:59:07] depths of thy boundless love.

Jesus, from Thee alone, borrowing my translator, Thou, Thou of righteousness, lending Thine austere grace, aid in Thy prides ever, through the long years which blend, [01:00:04] knowledge immaculate, Thine unperfected. knowledge immaculate, Thine unperfected.

Thus with the contemplation, heart of thy hasty longing, heart of thine unsworn, love of thy wondrous love, [01:01:05] there with Thy mercy love, Thou wilt rejoice in me, rest in triumphant love, sing for joy all of us, rest in triumphant love, sing for joy all of us.