

Remnant Life Church
03.19.23
The Prophetic and the Return of Jesus
Pt 3
John 14:1-3

We are in the midst of examining how Jesus used the common occurrence of a Galilean wedding to tell the disciples what would happen at the end of the time

- The question that is being asked the most today however, is when will Jesus return?
 - But the more important question is not when will Jesus return, but why will He return?
 - To state it simply - Jesus is coming back to receive His church unto Himself so that we may be where He is, with His father, in His father's house
- The entirety of that promise was spelled out by Jesus to His disciples
 - A wedding was the most significant event for any Galilean village
 - And Jesus used the sequences of that event to answer the question the disciples asked as recorded in **Matt 24:2** – ...*what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*
 - This is information that has only recently been discovered regarding the Galilean wedding and how it relates to the return of Jesus and the rapture of the church
 - I share this with you so that you will not doubt
 - So that you can be assured of what is coming for those who believe in Jesus Christ as their risen Lord and Savior and the Son of God.

1. It began with the Betrothal

- a. (S) It took place at the city gate
 - i. The gate was the seat of authority for the people
 1. It was where the elders would sit and where both justice and business transactions took place
 - ii. The bridegroom and his family would walk through the town to the gate to meet the bride and her family to begin the series of events that would lead to the wedding
- b. (S) The father of the bridegroom would begin the proceedings by reading a parchment scroll that spelled out all of the details of the proposal
 - i. God also presented each of us with a proposal
 - ii. It was the offer of His Son to pay the price for our sin
- c. (S) A sum of money was then presented by the father of the groom to the father of the bride to care for her needs while they were apart in preparation
 - i. The price paid for us was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ
 - ii. Our lives were paid for by the shed blood of the bridegroom
- d. (S) Finally, as the last act of the proposal, the bridegroom is handed a pitcher of wine by his father along with a ceremonial cup
 - i. (S) At that moment, the bride has been given all of the power to determine what would happen next
 1. She can outright reject the cup
 2. She could accept the cup but then return it to the groom without drinking

3. Or, she could accept the cup, drink from it, hand it back to the groom who would also drink signifying to all who were there that both have agreed to marry the other
 - ii. We too have been given a choice to accept or reject what God has offered us
 1. Then after drinking, the bridegroom will then say these words
 - a. *“You are now consecrated to me by the laws of Moses, and I will not drink from this cup again until I drink it anew with you in my father’s house.”*
 2. These same words were spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper when He told His disciples the meaning of His death
 - a. When Jesus presented the bread and the cup He was repeating the same actions and meaning of the wedding
 - b. When the bride and groom drank they were making a promise to be together again after the time of preparation
 - c. When Jesus repeated those same actions in the upper room He was saying to them and to each of us, ‘We will be together again.’
 - iii. How were the disciples able to associate these two things together?
 1. Because they were very familiar with the wedding and all that it meant
 2. In addition, remember that the first miracle Jesus performed was changing water into wine at a Galilean wedding
- Again, recognize each major participant of the betrothal and who each represents -
 - The father of the bridegroom is God the Father
 - The bridegroom is Jesus Christ
 - The bride is the believer individually and the church collectively

After the betrothal activities are complete, the bridegroom and bride return to their respective homes

- For the bride, it is a time to prepare herself for the return of the bridegroom, and to always be ready
- For the groom it was about preparing a place for them to live together

READ - John 14:1-3

Following the betrothal is a time of separation and preparation

- The Groom
 - The groom has a great deal to do in preparing for his bride
 - He must go and gather all the materials necessary in order to build a place for him and his bride to live
 - The room will be built onto his father’s house
 - He must also make the furniture as well as purchase all of the household goods
 - Notice what we just read

- Jesus, as the groom, had to return to His father's house to prepare a place for His bride, the church
 - These are the words that Jesus uses in **John 14:2** – *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.*
 - Jesus, like the Galilean groom, has gone to His Father's house to prepare a place for us
 - Jesus used the action of the earthly groom to show His disciples what He was going to be doing on our behalf
 - But that is only one half of what He said
 - He then said in verse **3** – *And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*
 - The groom must then come back for the bride.
- But the bride is not sitting idly by wasting time
 - The bride is also making preparations
 - She is preparing herself
 - During the time they are apart she is preparing the dress she will wear
 - And her attendants or bridesmaids are also helping her as well as getting themselves ready
 - And that is what her most important duty is...to be ready
 - Always
 - She must be vigilant and constantly in a state of readiness because she does not know when he will come for her
- As a matter of fact, throughout the entire time they are apart from each other, neither the groom nor the bride knows the day nor the hour that he will go to her
 - Only one person knows
 - The one who provided the payment for the groom to receive the bride
 - It is the father of the groom who will decide when the time has come
 - Only he knows when he will send his son to get his bride
 - The Galileans are the only culture who engage in this practice
 - And just as they did thousands of years ago, they still do it today
- In **Matthew 24:36** Jesus said these words to His disciples regarding His return - *No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*
 - Jesus, in speaking of His return, describes the anticipation of the Galilean groom and bride – so too it is true in both cases
 - Just as neither the groom nor the bride know the time of the return, so too we do not know today when Jesus will come for His bride, the church.
 - Yet that has not stopped many from saying they did know
 - These predictions began as early as just 500 years after Jesus ascended to heaven
 - Here a few of the more interesting ones

- In the early 1500's a mathematician by the name of Michael Stifel said that the rapture would occur on Oct 19, 1533 – oh, at 8:00 in the morning.
- In 1814 Joanna Southcott, a 64-year-old self-described prophet, claimed that she was pregnant with the Christ child and that he would be born on Christmas day, 1814. She died on the day of her prediction and an autopsy proved that was, in fact, not pregnant.
- In 1861 Joseph Morris told his followers not to plant crops because, in his own words, “Christ will be returning tomorrow.”
- In the late 1890s Joseph Smith the founder of the Church of Latter Day Saints made multiple predictions that proved to be false each time claiming that the prior dates were more ambiguous and open to interpretation than he had previously thought.
- The Catholic Apostolic Church, Sun Myung Moon, Hal Lindsay, Jerry Falwell, Jack Van Impe, and Jean Dixon along with many others have all set aside specific dates for Jesus to return – and every single one of them have been wrong
 - Why?
 - Because Jesus said, No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- The danger of each of these date-setters
 - They damage the power of the prophetic to those who don't know what God's Word says
 - It marginalizes or minimizes the power and the importance of the prophetic
 - And we have already said it sets the focus in the wrong place
 - It is not about the when
 - It is about the preparation
 - For many churches their solution to this problem is that they remove the prophetic from their teaching and discussion all together
 - Yet nearly 1/3 of all Scripture is prophecy
 - To remove prophecy from the Bible is to remove the return of Christ
 - Prophecy is what separates the Bible from all other “holy” books of other religions
 - Only Jesus is returning for His followers
 - Not Mohammad, not Buddha, not John Smith – only Jesus!
- Prophecy and its fulfillment is one way that God proves His divinity to those who do not know Him
 - But it is difficult because over 85% of Americans no longer believe the Bible is the Word of God
 - They believe it is a book of moral guidance comprised of stories not to be taken literally if recognized as anything other than fanciful tales

- Yet these same people will go to psychics, believe they can communicate with the dead, and faithfully follow their daily horoscope in the morning newspaper
- And what of the bride during this time?
 - As time goes on, the Galilean bride and her attendants will remain in a state of readiness - even sleeping in their wedding clothes
 - Why in the world would they do that?
 - Because while they may not know the day, they do know something of the time of day
 - Paul writes to the believers in Thessalonica regarding the “Day of the Lord” meaning the time of His coming
 - **I Thess 5:1-5** - *Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.*
- How do we see that demonstrated in the Galilean wedding?
 - At some point, and only when he is ready, the father will tell his son – ‘It is time. Go get your bride.’
 - This is done not in the light of day, but in the middle of the night – why?
 - To see who is ready but more importantly to ensure that the bride is ready.
- Like they did at the very beginning on their way to the betrothal, the groom and his family will parade through the streets, in the middle of the night, as he blows the Shofar
 - Only those of his neighbors who are prepared will be able to join them
 - Only the bride who is prepared will be standing and waiting for him as he approaches her house