

Handfuls On Purpose

Studies in the Book of Ruth

Chapter Twenty-one

The Resurrection of the Bride of Christ

“¹¹ And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be **famous** {proclaim thy name} in Bethlehem: ¹² And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman. ¹³ So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son” (Ruth 4:11-13).

Naomi represents saved Jews. Ruth represents saved Gentiles. Together they represent the Church made up of born again Jews and Gentiles. Just as Rachel and Leah built the “house of Israel, Naomi (saved Jews) and Ruth (saved Gentiles) will build body of Christ (His Church).

The time span between Ruth 4:11-12 and the actual time of the marriage is not told to us. It may have been right away or there may have been some time span involved. The picture before us is that of the Bride of Christ. Ruth 4:13 would portray the rapture of the Church and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Oriental wedding customs follow the pattern of Scripture. An oriental marriage involved two stages: the *Kiddushin* (Betrothal) and the *Huppah* (Canopy; the bringing home of the bride). Betrothal was considered a legally binding promise of marriage that afforded certain rights and privileges to the Bride. The woman, once betrothed, was considered and treated as a married woman. The betrothed woman was expected to be a virgin unless she was a widow. She was expected to remain a virgin until the *Huppah* ceremony. The period of time between the betrothal and the *Huppah* could be days, months, or years in some cases.

When believing sinners accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, they become His betrothed. The believer has similar rights and privileges of a wife the moment he/she is saved. Once saved, all the redeemed await the coming of the Bridegroom for His Bride. The Bride is responsible to maintain her moral purity until the *Huppah*. Christ’s coming for His Bride is what is known theologically as the *rapture* of the Church.

“¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:15-17).

The difference between the rapture and the second coming is that at the rapture Christ comes for His bride. At the second coming, Christ comes with His bride.

“To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (I Thessalonians 3:13).

The “witnesses” of Ruth 4:11 represent the witnesses to the proposal of redemption and marriage of Boaz (a type of Christ) to Ruth (along with Naomi, a type of the church). The resurrection of Jesus is the promise of the resurrection of the Church (redemption of our physical bodies) witnessed too by hundreds of people. This is summed up in I Corinthians 15:1-8.

“¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: ⁵ And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: ⁶ After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. ⁷ After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. ⁸ And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

The taking home of the Bride usually involved a seven day feast. This is typical of the Tribulation time. During these seven days the Church will be in Heaven with Jesus during the “seventieth week of Daniel” on the earth (the seven year tribulation). This celebration in Heaven is called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We only need to read Revelation 19:6-9 to see the similarities to the statement of the witnesses in Ruth 4:11-12.

“⁶ 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. ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. ⁹ And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

The Huppah ceremony and the friends of the Bridegroom

The ceremony would begin with the bridegroom gathering all of his friends around him and going to the bride’s home to take her for his wife. The redeemed of all ages are the friends of the Bridegroom as represented by John the Baptist.

“²⁶ And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him. ²⁷ John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. ²⁸ Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. ²⁹ He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. ³⁰ He must increase, but I *must* decrease” (John 3:26-30).

It is the united voice of all these redeemed souls who are not part of the Church Age who are around the throne of God and who announce the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

“⁶ 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. ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:6-7).

Finally, at the end of the celebration, the bride was escorted to the home of the bridegroom (this will take place at the Second Advent and is the next recorded event in Revelation 19:11-16).

The first resurrection/translation is in three phases.

The first phase is already completed and assures us of the next two phases. The first resurrection only involves those of the Church Age. Christ’s resurrection is the “first fruit” of the first resurrection (I Thessalonians 4:14).

“²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (I Corinthians 15:20-23).

The second phase of the first resurrection is what is recorded in I Thessalonians 4:16-17, commonly referred to as the Rapture.

“⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (I Corinthians 15:51-54).

The third phase of the first resurrection will take place after the seven-year tribulation period (exactly seven years after the second phase).

“¹ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, ³ And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. ⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:1-6).

The second resurrection will take place at the end of the Kingdom Age (1,000 year reign of Christ on earth). This will involve all people from Adam to the end of the world, both saved and lost, who were not part of the first resurrection. Those of the Church Age should be careful not to confuse these two different resurrections or the various phases of the first resurrection. For instance, Matthew 24:29-42 does not refer to the second phase of the first resurrection, but to the second coming of Christ just prior to the third phase.

“²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: ³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory {second coming, not the rapture}. ³¹ And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other {the rapture of the church}. ³² Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: ³³ So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors. ³⁴ Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. ³⁵ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. ³⁶ But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ³⁷ But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, ³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴¹ Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matthew 24:29-42).

The parable of the separation of the tares from the wheat in Matthew 13:24-30 refers neither to the rapture nor the second coming. It refers to the second resurrection just after the Millennial Kingdom and just before the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:7-15 and Daniel 12:1-3).

“²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: ²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. ²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. ²⁷ So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? ²⁸ He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:24-30).

“¹¹ And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15).

“¹ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. ² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. ³ And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:1-3).

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1. What do Naomi and Ruth typically represent together? _____

2. Thoroughly explain the following two stages of the oriental marriage.
 - A. Kiddushin (Betrothal): _____

 - B. Huppah (bringing the Bride home): _____

3. Discuss how the above two stages of an oriental wedding relate to the various eschatological (end time) events of the Church Age. Use Scripture to show the basis of your conclusions.
 - A. Kiddushin (Betrothal): _____

 - B. Huppah (bringing the Bride home): _____

4. Discuss the difference between the rapture of the Church and the second coming of Christ as they relate to the Bride of Christ. _____

5. Read I Corinthians 15:1-8. How do the “witnesses” of Ruth 4:11 relate to the witnesses of I Corinthians 15:1-8 and what is the theological significance to this comparison? _____

6. Read Revelation 19:6-9 with Ruth 4:11-12. How does the oriental wedding custom of a seven day feast relate to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Heaven and the Tribulation time on earth? _____

7. Read John 3:26-30 with Revelation 19:6-7. Discuss the friends of the Bridegroom, who they are and how they relate to the “great multitude” of Revelation 19:6. _____

8. Discuss and explain the three phases of the first resurrection. Give the Scripture you use for the basis of your conclusions.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

9. Explain the following Scripture texts according to their eschatological (end time) chronology (time table).
 - A. Matthew 24:29-34: _____

 - B. Matthew 13:24-30 with Revelation 20:11-15 and Daniel 12:1-3. _____
