

Guest Preacher - Mr. Donald Macaulay

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 May 2024

Preacher: Mr. Donald Macaulay

[0 : 00] Let's turn back then to the chapter that we read. The book of Revelation, chapter 19. And I want to look particularly at verse 9.

And the angel said to me, Write this. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, You must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. And particularly those words in the middle of verse 9. Write this. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Now, I may have stolen a sermon here from Murdo. I'm not sure. Because he's done breakfast, lunch and dinner.

[1 : 10] So the only one that's left is supper. So I thought I'd get in before him to do this. But to be honest, I had no thoughts of that when I was preparing this.

But it occurred to me this morning. This is a fascinating chapter. And as time allows us, I doubt if we'll get to the rider on the white horse, but we might.

But we'll have a look at the chapter from the beginning. And I'm sure, again, we're all familiar with, as we were doing a study on Revelation at the beginning of the year, we're familiar with the background to this particular section of the book of Revelation and the book of Revelation itself.

But again, just to remind us, we know that this was something that was revealed to John in the island of Patmos round about probably 85 AD.

There's some argument about the exact date. When John had been banished from Ephesus under the persecution of the Roman Empire and particularly the Emperor Domitian at that particular time.

[2 : 25] It's quite fascinating. I don't know if I've said this to you before, perhaps, but you can actually take a virtual tour round Patmos. It's a real place. It's a real island in the Aegean Sea.

And you can go online and you can actually take a tour and visit the cave where supposedly John lived during his exile on Patmos. We don't know how long he was there.

Some commentators think he was there perhaps as long as three years. But we don't know for sure. But afterwards, he returned to Ephesus and he died there.

And it's quite interesting to note that John is the only one of the 12 disciples who dies a natural death in the old age. All the others are martyred.

And we know that from the writings of various of the church fathers who mention details such as John being carried into the church as an old man when he could no longer walk by the young men of the congregation, etc., in Ephesus.

[3 : 32] And this recounts for us then, I'm sure you're familiar with that background, I'm not going to go into it in any more detail than that. And the book of Revelation recounts for us one complete vision.

Whenever you look at the beginning of sections or chapters, you'll see it's after this, after this, chapter 18, or it's then, etc.

And it's all a particular sequence that John is shown of the things to come. Now, I'm not going to go into the argument, you can argue with Mordo later if you want, which John this is.

Some people think it's not the Apostle John, but another John. Personally, I disagree with that. I'm pretty sure, I don't think there's any question that this is the Apostle John.

But that's just to divert away. And so we see at the beginning of chapter 19, after this, and if you look back at chapter 18, you will see that chapter 18 deals with the fall of Babylon.

[4 : 44] Now, the destruction of Babylon, again, is symbolic. Babylon represents the whole world order.

Whatever the world order was at that time, and whatever it is now, it will come to an end. And that is what chapter 18 deals with.

And you see that chapter 18, the section, the last verse of it, inner was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on the earth. And then comes this cry from a great multitude in heaven, crying out.

I suppose the first question we ask is, who is the great multitude? And there are some commentators who think that this is both angels and the souls of those who have been redeemed by the Lamb, in other words, believers, who are now in heaven.

Some think it's just the angels, some think it's just the souls of believers. But I think it's more logical to assume that it's both. And they call out, hallelujah.

[5 : 59] This is a most interesting word. You see it again in verse 3, and you see it again in verse 6. And it's the only time that the word hallelujah is used in the New Testament.

It occurs in the Old Testament in various Psalms, but it's not used anywhere else in the New Testament. What does it mean? I mean, we tend to sort of sing things with hallelujah in them quite often and use the word, perhaps without knowing exactly what it means.

And its meaning is, praise the Lord. Or to be more correct, from the Hebrew, it's praise Jehovah.

And that is reminding us of the covenant promises of Jehovah.

You remember that Jehovah is the covenant God, the promises that are made there. Hallelujah.

Salvation and glory and power belongs to our God, for His judgments are true and just.

For He has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with their immorality and has avenged under the blood of His servants. Now, the great prostitute refers back to the symbolism that is used in the chapters before.

[7 : 20] And you have to bear in mind to understand Revelation, and Mordor has emphasized this many times, that Revelation is a book of symbols.

It shows us things in figures, and not just literal figures. Numerology is extremely important. We've seen that in verse 4, where we see the 24 elders, who were the 24 elders, etc., and so on.

And the use of numbers is frequent throughout the book of Revelation to symbolize things. And we have to bear in mind that this is written for the first century church, the church who was undergoing persecution.

Therefore, the key to unlocking much of the symbolism of the book of Revelation has to lie in the Old Testament, because that is what they would have been familiar with up until the various parts of the New Testament are later put together.

Who are the 24 elders? Well, again, if you remember the simplest of the bits of numerology, seven is God's perfect number, and we find seven used frequently in the book of Revelation.

[8 : 45] You may have seven letters to seven churches, seven angels, etc., and so on. God's perfect number. The creation is in seven days, and so on. Three is the number of the Trinity.

Now, again, it's interesting, of course, the word Trinity, and again, you can search this yourself. The word Trinity is not used in Scripture, but Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are mentioned together frequently, even in the next part of the book of Revelation.

And the body used to say at one time, if you want to see the Trinity in action, go to the Jordan, and there you see the Son being baptized, the Father speaking from heaven, and the Holy Spirit coming down like a dove.

And so, three is the number of the Trinity, four is the universal number, three times four is twelve, twelve times two is twenty-four, simple mathematics.

And so, the twenty-four elders are twelve from the Old Testament and twelve from the New Testament, twelve who represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve who represent the twelve apostles.

[10 : 00] apostles. Now, it's quite fascinating and I've thought of this quite often and I've got no real answer to it. John is one of those twenty-four.

John, as an apostle, is one of those twenty-four. And is it himself that he's seeing in his glorified form? Who knows?

Or is it again simply a symbolic number? The four living creatures, again, the image is taken from the books of Ezekiel and Isaiah and these are the cherubim.

In Isaiah, they're referred to as the seraphim, but they represent the glory and the presence of God. And they fall down and worship God who was seated on the throne saying, Amen, Hallelujah.

Now, again, if you go back in Revelation, if it's, if I remember correctly, I think it's chapter 5, where you get a vision of the throne room of God with the, the twenty-four elders.

[11 : 06] Dear me, these pages. Mordo's been putting chewing gum on them here. Stick together. It's, in chapter 4, in fact, you get a vision of the, uh, throne room of heaven and, uh, you will notice that the twenty-four elders are in a circle round the throne.

They're not in front of the throne. They're in a circle. And the fact that they're in a circle, of course, denotes that God, the Father, on the throne as a spirit is not facing in a particular direction, but in all directions.

And these are just some things, by the way. And they worshipped God who was seated on the throne saying, Amen, Hallelujah. And then comes the voice, Praise our God, all your servants, you who fear him, small and great.

And then John hears what he says, it's like the voice of a great multitude. It's the same as we see in verse 1, the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder.

And the sound seems to be increasing. You notice from the beginning it's the loud voice of a great multitude. Now it seems to have increased.

[12 : 25] And it is coming almost to a climax. Hallelujah! For the Lord, our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory. For the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

And it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure. And then the angel says, write this.

And you will remember that there are certain things in Revelation that John is forbidden to write. He is told not to write them. But this is emphasized. Write this. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Now I don't like that translation. The AV says, blessed are those who are called. And I'll explain why I prefer the AV translation there in a moment or two.

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Now we saw in the song a moment or two ago that the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

[13 : 41] So first of all we have to understand what is meant by the marriage of the Lamb. Who is the Lamb? And the bride making herself ready.

Well the Lamb is easy enough for us to understand. We go back we find John the Baptist saying behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And we saw earlier in the book of Revelation the Lamb standing at the side of the throne. A Lamb who looked as if it was slain from the foundation of the world.

Now the references to this are all the way throughout Revelation. Who is the Lamb? The second half of the chapter showed us. He is the one sitting on the white horse.

And he is both the Lamb and as he's mentioned elsewhere the Lion of the tribe of Judah. And the marriage of the Lamb has come.

[14 : 46] It's an amazing thing to think of when this marriage was decided on. I don't know if you were listening to the Gaelic service this morning where an elder from Uist was speaking briefly about that and I found it quite interesting what he said.

I'd never thought of it before. And he said that this marriage was decided on in heaven before anything was created.

Now I didn't disagree with that I think he's quite correct on that. But he said one or two other things and again I don't want to criticize he said one or two other things after that that opened up other possibilities as well.

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Now if we know that the Lamb symbolizes the Lord Jesus Christ then we have to think in terms of what is meant by the marriage of the Lamb.

We know that the figure of marriage is used frequently throughout scripture and it's used throughout scripture to indicate the union that is to come between Christ and his church.

[16 : 13] That's what the marriage of the Lamb is all about. And therefore from very early on in scripture especially throughout the Old Testament we have announcement after announcement of this marriage that is coming.

Even in Isaiah we see that God says to Israel I thy maker am thy husband. and if you look through particularly some of the perhaps texts or books that we don't read so often now Song of Solomon is the most perfect example perhaps of the love song of the marriage of the Lamb and his bride the Shulamite and you remember those of you who are familiar with it and if you're not familiar with the Song of Solomon it's time you were you go into chapter two and you see that he is that the groom takes the bride into the banqueting house and we're told so beautifully that the banner over it is love that this is the root of course of any marriage now the symbolism that is used here comes from the Jewish marriage and the

Jewish marriage in order to fully understand this we need to understand what a Jewish marriage was like first of all there was the betrothal and the betrothal was in a sense very similar to what we would call nowadays an engagement but it was regarded much more seriously even legally than people regard engagements nowadays not every engagement ends in marriage but every betrothal in Jewish times did end in marriage unless of course something some accident took place to either the bride or the future groom it was a binding contract and we see this in the example of Joseph and Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ how this betrothal you remember that Joseph was afraid to take

Mary to him when he discovered that she was child and we're told of course that God speaks to him in a dream and sets his heart at ease on that so first came the betrothal and that in one sense meant that this was almost like a legal contract it was almost as legally binding as the marriage itself then there would be an interval as there is with our modern engagement between the betrothal and the actual marriage feast itself and sometimes that may have taken some considerable time up to a year sometimes even longer than that it depended and then the groom on the arranged date would come to fetch his wife his wife to be and he would lead her in procession usually through the Jewish villages from the bride's house all the way through to the house that he had built or prepared for their marriage and if that wasn't the case if they were still in the process to his parents house and then the festivities would begin and the festivities lasted seven days you notice again the use of seven God's perfect number seven days and the bride would adorn herself for the procession and you see that referred to in if you look across at chapter 21 in revelation you'll see it in verse 2 I saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband now I'm sure that no bride wants to look ugly on her wedding day quite the reverse to use the common phrase she's dolled up like a dog's dinner as is of course the husband to be as well there to be seen at their best on their wedding day at least that's what they hope anyway but when we see this the adornment of the bride for her husband in chapter 21 there is no doubt here about the beauty of the bride because we read in chapter 19 the bride has made herself ready and verse 8 it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen bright and pure for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints now the fine linen again is symbolic right through from the old testament if you go back to the priesthood when the clothes of the priests are being described as God instructs

[21 : 55] Moses you will see that fine linen is a marker of that and again that of course reflected purity in the whiteness of the linen itself and we see throughout scripture if you look for example at the visions that Daniel has when the angels appear to him or the angel appears to him and Gabriel appears to him and you'll see also the same in Ezekiel that it is a man dressed in fine linen that is usually one who is speaking to him and so that this is symbolic of the sanctification of the Lord's people those who pass into glory and who are fully sanctified are dressed in fine linen now I don't suppose we have to think that that means that we will be wearing white robes in heaven maybe it does who knows

I haven't been there yet so I'm not sure but if you think of it this way if this is all symbolic when you look back at the transfiguration what were Moses and Elijah wearing fascinating to think about that one who died and one who never died and yet they're both appearing with Jesus there on the mount of transfiguration and if you look at the description that the gospel writers give it appears again that the brightness is such that Peter James and John cannot look at it they're frightened by the glory of it and we see it again when you look at the tomb the angel that appears inside the tomb after Christ has risen is described as dressed in fine linen and the brightness of it now whether it is actually like that or that is just symbolic we will have to wait and see but nevertheless it refers to the purity of the people of God and this is what the bride the symbolism of the bride is the bride has made herself ready who is the bride it is the church militant and the church triumphant and if you're

not familiar with the two terms the church militant you and I are part of the church militant here on earth the church triumphant are the saints already in heaven and it seems that the church militant and the church triumphant are united here to come to the marriage supper of the lamb so that tells us when this must take place it cannot take place until the church triumphant is fully gathered in is fully gathered in nobody will be missing nobody of the church militant will be missing from the church triumphant at the marriage of the lamb and therefore that tells us that this has to take place at the end the end times that it must be around the second coming or shortly after the second coming of the

Lord Jesus Christ and this is what John sees and this is what the angel says to him write this blessed blessed are those who are called I prefer to the married supper of the lamb why do I prefer called well think of it this way there are many who are invited to a wedding but not everyone who receives an invitation will accept it or perhaps will be able to go perhaps even in some cases may not want to go but you have a situation here where nobody can refuse this call this is not an invitation that can be turned down and it's not an invitation that anyone of the church triumphant would want to church down because this is what you and I should be looking forward to for all eternity that we will be spending our time at the married supper of the lamb now there are some commentators who think that the supper simply is one of these things that take place and after that eternity others think that no this is the state this is describing the state of bliss that the Lord's people will be in for all eternity present the bride present with the groom that's the way it's described in Song of Solomon that's the analogy that we see in the book of Hosea when we look at that in detail as well you see it in other places you see it in the New Testament in Ephesians Paul writes about it in Ephesians 5 when he says that marriage is a mystery it's the mystery of Christ and his church and although there are many examples in that that we can apply to marriage in our own lifetimes nevertheless the mystery of Christ and his church is a mystery that we will go on experiencing throughout eternity and that's why I prefer called rather than invited it's an effectual call it's not an invitation that can be turned down because the

Lord's people have been elect since before the foundation of the world chosen in the beloved and all you have to do is look at the high priestly prayer in John 17 to see that in detail as Jesus says Father I thank you for those that you have given me thine they were and thou gavest them me they have been elected in love since before the foundation of the world and yet they were purchased at a price purchased by the blood of the cross by the atonement that was rendered by the blood that was shed and these were figures that we saw from the Old Testament you remember Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac and there are so many things connected with that that it's so difficult for us to understand have you ever wondered what

[29 : 28] Abraham was thinking as he walked for three days with Isaac on the way to sacrifice him must have been so difficult for him but yet he was prepared to carry out the Lord's instruction and yet you remember that when he gets there and he's on the point having bound him and tied him to the altar you remember the question that Isaac had asked we have the fire the wood etc and the knife where is the lamb where is the lamb for the sacrifice and you remember Abraham's reply God himself will provide a lamb but yet when you look at what happens in the chapter it's not a lamb that God provides it's a ram have you ever wondered why it was a ram and not a lamb because throughout scripture the emphasis on Christ as the lamb of God is so clear but yet he could not be sacrificed until he had come to full maturity he could not begin his ministry until he was 30 years old because that's when the

Levitical priesthood began their ministry and so you have this picture of the ram fully mature male that replaces Isaac as the sacrifice and it is this sacrifice at Calvary that allows you and I to be washed in the blood of the atonement that allows you and I to be betrothed to the bridegroom and I have to ask you this evening you've all heard the invitation those online you are also hearing the invitation the invitation is given as it is given here those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb have you accepted the invitation or is it simply an invitation that you put to one side and you postpone and say well

I'll decide later on I'll decide whether I've got enough money for a wedding present whether I'll go later etc and so on I'll decide various things but you remember you see if you look back at the figure that is given here at the incarnation the Lord Jesus Christ has paid the dowry price for his bride he pays the full price on the cost it's not so common nowadays to have a dowry perhaps some of the young ones have never heard that word but the dowry was what the bride brought to the wedding

and usually the dowry was the price that the husband had to pay the parents for her now again it depended on the circumstances of the groom whether of course the dowry was great or small etc or whatever and I can still remember my granny telling me about the wedding chest that was still upstairs and old wooden chest still in our house somewhere where she said oh that's where you put things for the next wedding

I'm sure many of you will remember that and it was very often sheets and blankets and things like that that were put into it and years later when we took them out they were moth eaten none of them none of this dowry is going to be moth eaten this is what the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that you prepare for a place where neither the moth corrupts nor rust eats away etc and he has prepared the way for us the dowry has been paid now some people maintain that the dowry is paid at the moment of the incarnation some of the commentators maintain that others maintain that it is not actually paid until the crucifixion and others say that it is not paid until the ascension until Christ returns to heaven I'm not particularly sure it would be interesting to talk about this one later on I'm not sure which one of the three views is correct or whether even they're all correct but we can be sure now that Christ having died been crucified been resurrected and ascended into heaven that the dowry price is paid in full and therefore there is the interval between the betrothal the dowry and the marriage and that interval will be when the second coming of Christ takes place when he comes to bring his church home when those who are in the graves when the bodies will be resurrected I know that some people ask and say then well you know where are they now catechism tells you so clearly that when the people of the Lord die that their souls are united to

[35 : 27] Christ in heaven but that is not their final state it's quite amazing to think about that you would think that being united to Christ would be enough in eternity but there's more to it than that there's the resurrection still to come now I'm not going to speculate on what form the resurrection body will be in Paul does that in the letter to the Corinthians he doesn't speculate he actually tells us what it will be like a glorified body and in a sense I don't care what it will be like it doesn't matter as long as I have one that's the only thing that matters and as we meditate on this marriage the marriage of the lamb has come and the bride has made herself ready I have to ask you again will you be there what are you doing with this invitation the invitation is going out now it's gone out to you time and time again and it will continue to go out it goes out in pulpits all over our land and yet we seem to think that the

Lord's spirit is inactive at the moment that people are not being brought to face nothing could be further from the truth it would seem to us that this is a day of small things but nevertheless God is working in amazing ways perhaps not in our island and not in Scotland as much as it used to be or as much as we would like but when you hear what is going on in other parts of the world the Lord is building his church and will continue to build his church and the marriage will not take place until all the jewels are gathered in as he puts it in the Old Testament until all the jewels are gathered in and there are still jewels to be gathered in perhaps yet unborn hopefully yet unborn but there are many who have turned down the invitation time has passed

I don't have time to go into the white horse but if you look across at the end of this chapter you see the beast and the false prophet being thrown into the lake of fire and then if you look at the end of chapter 20 after the millennium period and again I'm not going to go into that time wouldn't allow here death and heads at verse 14 are thrown into the lake of fire this is the second death and if anyone's name was not found in the book of life he was thrown into the lake of fire these are the only two places that scripture mentions for us that will be there in eternity some people put it simply by saying well it's either heaven or hell there's no third alternative but I personally prefer to think of it this way that it will either be at the table of the marriage supper of the lamb and when we come next sabbath to celebrate the lord's supper we'll be seeing a semblance of that as well but the other alternative doesn't bear thinking about let us pray our father in heaven we thank you that we can come to meditate upon these things amazing things that were revealed to john and that through through what he saw and wrote down that you have revealed to us and we thank you that we can meditate upon these things even although we have to confess there are things difficult to understand things perhaps even that we cannot understand but nevertheless we understand this we understand our need for a saviour and we thank you that the rider on the white horse has overcome oh we pray for any as yet who do not know you as saviour we pray oh lord that you will open our eyes to see you in your beauty to see you as the bridegroom standing with arms wide open in love calling to come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest

be with us then as we close our worship as we conclude our worship and pardon sin for
Christ's sake amen let us conclude then by singing in psalm 125 scottish psalter page 419 psalm
125 sing the whole psalm they in the lord that firmly trust shall be like sion hill which at no time can
be removed but standeth ever still as round about Jerusalem the mountains stand all way the lord
his folk doth compass so from henceforth and foray let us sing the whole psalm then to god's praise
they in the lord that firmly trust shall be like sion hell which at no time go
Revealed Was turned And ever Still As Word Of Genesis The Mounted Stamped All Way The Lord
Is Hooked A Compass So From Thou Thou Thou Thou Thou Thou Thou Thou Thou Thou
Thou Thou Thou Thou Of Just Men
[42 : 58] Child Not Lie Let My Just Men Stretch For Thou Thou Thou Thou In Equity Do Thou To
All those that be good Thy goodness Lord impart And do our good To all the dark All of life within
that heart But does for such a star
A sight of the red blue can wave For child lead forth With wicked men On Israel He shall stay The
grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all,
now and forever. Amen.