

## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY (ORGANIZED BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

### Part X: Christology (Doctrine Of Jesus Christ)

#### F. The Future Work Of Christ

##### I. Introduction

- A. We know from our Premillennial, Pretribulational theology that Jesus will take the Church to heaven only to return to the earth with the Church to reign in the Millennial Kingdom and the later Eternal State.
- B. Yet, many Christians deny this view of future events, holding to a Prewrath Rapture or Posttribulation Rapture or even denying a literal Millennial Kingdom exists!
- C. However, we can **validate** the Premillennial, Pretribulational position in noting Christ relates to His Bride, the Church (Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:7-8) in accord with the schedule of events in the Oriental wedding of the Ancient Near East. We view this format for that evidence on eschatology (as follows):

##### II. The Future Work Of Christ (I am indebted to Walvoord's, Jesus Christ Our Lord and to a paper by Bill Gothard's Seminar on Basic Youth Conflicts on Ancient Near Eastern Oriental weddings.)

- A. The Ancient Near Eastern Oriental wedding provides a picture of Christ's **PAST** works:
  1. In such a format, the bridegroom begins the marital proceedings in traveling from his father's house to the home of his prospective bride to make arrangements with her father. Likewise, Jesus left His heavenly Father's home to come to earth in the first advent to find a Bride, Ephesians 5:25-28.
  2. On this trip, the bridegroom pays the dowry price to the bride's father for her hand in marriage. Jesus likewise paid for our redemption with His blood on the cross, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
  3. Upon payment of the price, though the marriage was not yet physically consummated, the bridegroom and bride were considered **positionally, legally WED**. In like manner, when one believes in Christ, he is **positionally** united with Christ in the spiritual realm, Ephesians 5:25-27.
  4. With the wedding agreement made, the bride and groom drank from a cup over which a betrothal benediction had been pronounced to symbolize the establishment of a covenant relationship. The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Table picture the believer's relationship with Christ, the Bridegroom of the Bride, the Church, 1 Cor. 11:25; Mtt. 28:19-20.
  5. After the covenant was established, the bridegroom **returned** to his Father's house to remain there for a year. Christ has likewise returned to His heavenly Father's house, Acts 1:8.
- B. The Ancient Near Eastern Oriental wedding provides a picture of Christ's **PRESENT** works: during the year the bride and bridegroom were separated, the groom prepared living quarters in his father's house for his bride, and the bride gathered her wardrobe to prepare for married life. As the Bridegroom, Jesus is preparing now a place for His Bride, the Church, in His Father's heavenly home, John 14:1-3. Also, the Church is doing godly works for her wedding garment, cf. Revelation 19:7-8.
- C. The Ancient Near Eastern Oriental wedding provides a picture of Christ's **FUTURE** works:
  1. After this, the best man and other male escorts left the Father's house, usually at night, and went to the bride's father's home. Though the bride expected her groom's arrival, she did not know the exact time he would come, so the bridegroom's arrival was preceded by a shout. Christ will likewise return for the **whole** Church in a sudden arrival in the air with a shout, Jn. 14:3; 1 Thes. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-57.
  2. The groom received his bride in his evening arrival, and she, with her female escorts, returned to the groom's father's house where the marriage was physically consummated. Likewise, in heaven, the Church will experience the purifying Bema Seat judgment of Christ, leaving her spotless for total spiritual experiential fellowship with Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 5:8-10; Rom. 14:10-12; Rev. 19:7.
  3. A wedding feast then followed for the wedding party and guests. When Christ returns to the earth with the Church, the defeat of Armageddon with the Millennial Kingdom and following Eternal State will function as the "wedding feast" of Christ, the Lamb of God, with His Bride, the Church, and wedding guests of Old Testament and Tribulation era saints, cf. Rev. 19:7-9, 17-18; Rev. chs. 20-22.

***Lesson: The PREMILLENNIAL, PRETRIBULATIONAL rapture of the Church, followed by the seven-year Great Tribulation when the Church is in heaven and the Bema Seat judgment occurs for the Church, then Christ's Millennial reign and the following Eternal State are all verified in the Ancient Near Eastern Oriental Wedding format. As such, this format validates our view of future events!***