

Revelation Chapter 19

Revelation chapter 19 and 20 bring the climax of the Book of Revelation: the return of Christ to establish His Earthly Kingdom.

But first, the first five verses show heaven's response to the judgment of the harlot.

The multitude in heaven praises God for judging the great whore (Babylon, the harlot), and avenging the blood of the martyrs (7:9-17). The eternal smoke symbolizes the permanence of Babylon's destruction (Isaiah 34:8-10). Amen derives from a Hebrew word meaning "to be firm," and may be translated "truly" or "so be it."

This chapter is one of the most dramatic in all the Bible. In it, the Church, the Bride of Christ, is the guest of honor at the marriage of the Lamb in heaven (verses 1-10), and returns with Christ in His Triumphal Second Coming (verses 11-21). The people mentioned here are distinct from the other beings in heaven, for they are singing a song that includes mention of salvation. This scene incorporates believers, the Old Testament saints, the Church age saints, and the Tribulation saints. Together they join this great chorus proclaiming "Alleluia!"

The scene now shifts from the earth where it has been (since chapter 6), to heaven.

Verses 1-6: "Alleluia": This Hebrew word appears 4 times in the New Testament. This exclamation, meaning "Praise the Lord", occurs frequently in the Old Testament (compare Psalms 104:35; 105:45; 106:1; 111:1; 112:1; 113:1; 117:1; 135:1; 146:1). Five reasons for their praise emerge:

- (1) God's deliverance of His people from their enemies (verse 1);
- (2) God's meting out of justice (verse 2);
- (3) God's permanent crushing of man's rebellion (verse 3);
- (4) God's sovereignty (verse 6); and
- (5) God's communion with His people (verse 7).

Revelation 19:1 "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God:"

In the last chapter, we saw the terrible destruction of commercial and political Babylon symbolized by its capital city of Babylon. Now the scene totally changes to heaven. We hear the voices of the redeemed. This "great voice" here is because of the number of people speaking. It is not the magnitude of each voice. These words of praise here are focused on the Lord Jesus Christ. The redeemed are the ones who are praising. There are not enough adjectives in the dictionary to say enough about what Jesus has purchased for us all.

“After these things”: This is a time key. After the destruction of Babylon at the end of the “Great Tribulation, just before the kingdom is established (chapter 20). This section bridges the Tribulation and the millennial kingdom.

The marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper of the Lamb "in heaven" (19:6-9), are evidence of the Church being in heaven prior to the return of Christ to earth. Christ is the Bridegroom at the marriage and his Church is the Bride. The word "church" (Greek ekklesia), appears nineteen times (in Revelation 1-3), and does not appear again until (Revelation 22:16), emphasizing the absence of the Church from the earth during the judgments of (Rev. chapters 4-18).

"I heard a great voice of much people in heaven": The people are the same with the 144000 seen with the Lamb on Mount Zion (Revelation 14:1), and with those on the sea of glass, who had got the victory over the beast (Revelation 15:2), and are no other than God's covenant people, who are given to Christ, and made willing to be his in the day of his power. And though they are but a seed, a remnant, a small company, when compared with the world and carnal professors; yet are a large body of themselves.

Especially they will be now, when the nation of the Jews shall be born at once, and the fullness of the Gentiles will be brought in. And their voice on this occasion and the downfall of Rome, is said to be "great" partly because of their number. Who will join in acclamations of praise, and partly on account of their great affection and vehemence of spirit, which will be raised hereby.

Revelation 19:2 "For true and righteous [are] his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

“Judgments”: Saints long for the day of judgment (compare 6:10; 16:7; Isa. 9:7; Jer. 23:5). Godly people love righteousness and hate sin, for righteousness honors God and sin mocks Him. Believers long for a world of justice and it will come (verse 15; 2:27; 12:5).

It appears that those who were redeemed were looking on from heaven and approving of the destruction of Babel, because the Messiah was bringing justice and righteousness to the world.

There is a reassuring tone here telling the Lord that He was justified in His judgment. They have long waited for the time when God's justice would triumph. Now that time had come.

"Which did corrupt the earth with her fornication": Drew the kings and inhabitants of the Roman empire into wicked and idolatrous practices, and so corrupted and destroyed them in soul, body, and estate.

"And hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand": And by these judicial dispensations God hath also taken vengeance on them for the blood of his saints shed by them. It is remarkable, that all along this book idolatry and persecution are made the beast's provoking sins.

Revelation 19:3 "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

“Smoke rose”: This is because of the fire (compare 17:16, 18; 18:8-9, 18; 14:8-11).

This is saying that this judgment is permanent and is like the language that God used (in Gen. 19:28). This is just a statement telling us it will never be built again.

This destruction of the last, most powerful empire in history marks the end of man's day. The rebellion that had begun in the Garden of Eden is finally ended. Never again will there be more false religions, worldly philosophy, injustice or unrighteousness.

Then entire sorry results of human depravity will finally be vanquished.

Revelation 19:4 "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

These twenty-four elders, I believe, as I said before, are two groups of twelve, twelve disciples and twelve Old Testament prophets. These are representative of the church.

“Four beasts”: The four beasts are the cherubim as described (in Rev. 4:6). These compose the same group as (in 7:11), and are associated with worship frequently (4:8, 11; 5:9-12, 14; 11:16-18).

Revelation 19:5 "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."

The speaker isn't identified but is probably an angel and refers to God as our God. His instructions are to praise God.

The redeemed in heaven are called God's "Bond Servants", and this is the group being addressed here to add to the other 3 mentioned groups.

“Both small and great”: All distinctions and ranks are to be transcended. The small and the great mean everyone which includes all human categories and distinctions. All redeemed are told to praise God.

Verses 6-10: “Omnipotent”: God is all-powerful, and “reigneth” over His universe. “The marriage of the Lamb”: The “wife” or bride of Christ is the church (compare Matt. 22:2-14; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32), and the marriage is the eternal union of the church with Christ following the Rapture (compare 1 Thess. 4:17). The “fine linen, clean and white”, represents the “righteousness” of the church, which has now been judged and purified at the judgment seat of Christ (compare 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). “The marriage supper of the Lamb” represents the millennial kingdom of Christ, which will take place on earth following the return of Christ (20:4; compare Matt. 25:1-13; Luke 14:15-24).

“Called”: Those who are invited to the marriage supper are Israel, who will turn to Christ in faith during the Tribulation (compare Jer. 31:31-34; Zech. 12:10; 13:9; Rom. 11:25-27). “Worship”: Only God is to be worshiped (compare 22:8-9; Acts 10:25-26). “Spirit of prophecy”: The person and message of Jesus is the essence of all true prophecy.

Revelation 19:6 "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."

So vast is this group that they are without number. These are the faithful. When this great multitude begin to praise God, the volume would be so great as to sound like "mighty thunderings".

“Lord God”: Used many times in Revelation as a title for God (compare verse 15, 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 21:22). The great praise of the multitude sounds like a massive crashing of waves.

This name used here, pertaining to our Lord, is a very strange one. This is the only place in the Bible where the word "omnipotent" occurs. Omnipotent means almighty: having unlimited power. When you couple that with "Lord", which means supreme in authority, and "God", which means supreme deity; you have an overwhelming understanding of Who this is.

Then we look at "reigneth". This has no time element attached. It means continually reigns.

At this point the evil world system has been destroyed and God's kingdom has come into its fullness.

Revelation 19:7 "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."

The heavenly praise continues, this time for a call for gladness, rejoicing and giving God glory for a fifth reason, the marriage of the Lamb has come.

“Marriage of the Lamb”: Hebrew weddings consisted of 3 phrases:

- (1) Betrothal (often when the couple were children);
- (2) Presentation (the festivities, often lasting several days, that preceded the ceremony);
- (3) The ceremony (the exchanging of vows).

The church was betrothed to Christ by His sovereign choice in eternity past (Eph. 1:4; Heb. 13:20), and will be presented to Him at the Rapture (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). The final supper will signify the end of the ceremony. This symbolic meal will take place at the establishment of the millennial kingdom and last throughout that 1000 year period (compare 21:2). While the term “bride” often refers to the church, and does so here (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-24), it ultimately expands to include all the redeemed of all ages, which becomes clear in the remainder of the book.

The marriage of the Lamb: The wife or bride of Christ is the church (Matt. 22:2-14; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32). And the marriage is the eternal union of the church with Christ following the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17). The fine linen, clean and white, represents the righteousness of the church, which has now been judged and purified at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

This is in total contrast to the harlot Babylon. Here we see the chaste virgin (faithful to Jesus). At a marriage, there is rejoicing and giving of honor. The strange thing to me, is that Jesus would even have us. We have been washed in His blood, and we have on our white wedding garment ready for the wedding. I believe the word "Lamb" is used here, instead of one of the other names of Jesus, to show that we have been cleansed by His sacrificial blood.

In ancient times, a marriage was the single greatest celebration and social event in the biblical world. Preparations and celebrations were much more elaborate than those of today. And they also lasted much longer.

They were in three distinct stages which first involved the betrothal or engagement. This was an arrangement by both sets of parents, was legally binding and could only be broken by divorce. Then there was a time of preparation as the groom prepared for his bride.

Second was the presentation which was a time of festivities just before the actual ceremony. Those festivities could last up to a week and sometimes even more depending on the economic or social status of the bride and groom.

Lastly was the wedding ceremony during which time the vows were exchanged.

The same imagery of a wedding picture's the Lord's relationship with His Church.

Revelation 19:8 "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."

“Righteousness of saints”: Not Christ’s imputed righteousness granted to believers at salvation, but the practical results of that righteousness in believer’s lives, i.e., the outward manifestation of inward virtue.

The fine linen the bride is clothed in represents the righteous acts of the saints.

Just as I said, these robes have been made white by the blood of the Lamb. This "righteousness" was not ours until we received the Lord Jesus into our lives and took on His righteousness. Our own righteousness had been as filthy rags, but Jesus replaced the filth with His righteousness. Just like, as many other places in the Bible, "her" does not mean just women, it is the bride. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are the bride of Christ, whether they are male or female.

I would like to say a few words about this "fine linen". In the tabernacle in the wilderness, the High priest wore a very ornamented robe with a breastplate of all sorts of jewels when he represented God to the people; but when he went into the Holy of Holies, he wore pure white

linen. You see, all of the fineries of the world mean nothing to God. This tells us something about our approach to God. Salvation is simple. It is not complicated, just bare all to God. He knows all there is about us already. We do not have to pretend to be something we are not. He accepts us plain and simple.

Revelation 19:9 "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."

“Blessed” (see note on 1:3).

“They which are called”: This is not the bride (the church), but the guests. The bride doesn’t get invited, she invites. These are those saved before Pentecost, all the faithful believers saved by grace through faith up to the birth of the church (Acts 2:1ff). Though they are not the bride, they still are glorified and reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom. It is really differing imagery rather than differing reality. The guests also will include tribulation saints and believers alive in earthly bodies in the kingdom. The church is the bride, pure and faithful, never a harlot, like Israel was (see Hosea chapter 2). So, the church is the bride during the presentation feast in heaven, then comes to earth for the celebration of the final meal (during the Millennium). After that event, the new order comes and the marriage is consummated (see notes on 21:1-2).

Those who are invited to the marriage supper are Israel, who will turn to Christ in faith during the Tribulation (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Zech. 12:10; 13:9; and Roman 11:25-27).

The marriage supper of the Lamb represents the millennial kingdom of Christ, which will take place on earth following the return of Christ (20:4; Matt. 25:1-13; Luke 14:15-24). The Jewish marriage consisted of three major elements:

- (1) The betrothal;
- (2) The presentation; and
- (3) The marriage feast (supper), as was discussed just before.

Figuratively, with reference to the church,

- (1) The betrothal takes place on earth during the church age;
- (2) The presentation will take place in heaven following the Rapture (verse 7); and
- (3) The marriage feast will take place on earth following Christ's return with the church.

Revelation 19:10 "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See [thou do it] not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

“Fell at his feet”: Overwhelmed by the grandeur of the vision, John collapsed in worship before the angel (compare 1:17; 22:8).

“Do it not” (compare 22:8-9). The Bible forbids the worship of angels (Col. 2:18-19).

John here was so awed by all of this that he fell at this angel's feet to worship him. Then the angel quickly tells John not to worship him. Only God is to be worshiped (22:8-9; Acts 10:25-26).

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”: The central theme of both Old Testament prophecy and New Testament preaching is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The "testimony of Jesus" is what the whole Bible is about. Without Jesus, there would be no salvation. The Old Testament points forward to Jesus, beginning in Genesis. The New Testament is the "last will and testament" of Jesus, and to receive our inheritance, we must read the will.

If you preach on prophecy, you are bringing the testimony of Jesus. If you understand the testimony of Jesus, then you must preach and prophesy so that others may live. This testimony here is not Jesus giving it, but we believers who testify of the Lord. Whoever this angel is, he too had the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation Chapter 19

1. In verse 1, this great voice from heaven was whom?
2. What were they saying?
3. Who are these people?
4. What two words describe His judgements?
5. Who had He judged?
6. What had she corrupted the earth with?
7. Whose blood had He avenged?
8. Those looking from heaven approved what?
9. What kind of fornication is this?
10. What did the "avenging the blood" probably mean?
11. Who said Amen, Alleluia as they worshipped around the throne?
12. The voice that came out of the throne said what?
13. Who were the twenty-four elders?

14. What are the four beasts?
15. The voice of this great multitude was as the voice of _____.
16. Chapter 19 of Revelation is the only place in the Bible that this name describing God is used. What is it?
17. What does it mean?
18. What does Lord mean?
19. What does this particular rendition of God mean?
20. What does "reigneth" mean?
21. "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him: for the _____ of the _____ is come"
22. Who are the chaste virgin?
23. Why is the word "Lamb" used here to speak of Jesus?
24. What is the "righteousness of the saints" that they are clothed with?
25. Who is the bride of Christ?
26. What does the linen garment tell us about salvation?
27. Who are the Blessed?
28. Why did John bow to this angel?
29. Why did the angel tell John not to do this?
30. What is the testimony of Jesus?
31. What is the New Testament?
32. If you understand the testimony of Jesus, what must you do?
33. Summarize this lesson in your own words.