

Revelation Study Guide

Chapter 19 – The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Revelation 19 is the climax of the story of the Bible. In it we see the celebration of the defeat over the first enemy Babylon and the enactment of the defeat over the second enemy – the antichrist and his kingdom. Although this chapter is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible it is still interesting that the chapter is clearly divided between two events. The first half of Chapter 19 is the conclusion to the destruction of Babylon which we have been looking at for the last two chapters. The second half of Chapter 19 is the beginning of John's final seven visions that he sees about the return and reign of Christ. Chapter numbers were not part of the original manuscripts and it appears that there was discontinuity involved in making this chapter division. I do understand the scribes' intentions of dividing the chapter into its current verses since it is about two feasts – the marriage supper of the Lamb being the first feast and the feasting of the birds on all of the antichrist's army as the second feast. And maybe it signals to us the intention that these events are closely connected or that the marriage feast will transpire over a longer period of time than one would normally think, but it appears that the author's intention was that these events were separate. Beginning at Revelation 19:11 there are seven verses that describe John's final visions which will actually go all the way through Revelation 21:1. They are 19:11; 19:17; 19:19; 20:1; 20:4; 20:11; 21:1. Each of these verses begins with "And I saw" and seem to be connected in some way at least in John's communication of them. This will be helpful for us as we talk about the final chapters of Revelation and remember not to separate them from each other, but to think about them in their greater context as the author appears to have intended.

As we talked about last chapter there is a stark contrast between the activity of heaven and earth and there is also a stark difference between Babylon and the Bride. Babylon who ruled on earth is destroyed and the Bride who was persecuted is victorious. Louis Brighton wonderfully explains these two entities and their end time identities in his Revelation commentary.

Babylon: "She is the spiritual force that encourages and motivates the peoples of the world in their own lusts and desires for position and power and wealth. She is the queen of her world. And all this power of position and influence and spirituality she uses against the church, her rival 'stepsister,' in order to destroy her. She wants to believe that she is the most beautiful and encourages the people of the world to receive her as the true bride of Christ. For this reason, the harlot is also called 'the false prophet'. But in her heart, she knows she is not that bride, for someone else holds that position before God, her 'stepsister' whom she hates and taunts. And though her poor 'stepsister,' is dressed, to the human eye, in rags and is the laughing stock of the world, the harlot is terribly jealous of her. For she knows that one day the despised woman in rags—and not she herself—will be the bride of Christ." (p.523-524)

Bride: "During her earthly life she was spiritually clothed in the righteousness of Christ and washed in his blood, but to the human eye she was destitute, dressed in rags, spurned by the world, and mocked by the harlot. But now at the End she is publicly honored by God for all to see as the bride of his Son. Now she is arrayed in her wedding garment, as she is presented to her husband. The day for which she, the

church, so ardently longed has arrived. The bride comes to her Lord with rejoicing and with the hymn of the Hallelujah Chorus, for now the time of weeping and fasting has passed, and she joins the angelic choir in singing the Te Deum to her God and Savior. From now through all eternity, she will bask in his majestic presence and behold his unveiled face.” (p.524)

The other context to keep in mind as we study this chapter is that there is much more going on here than it appears – from what is described for us in these few verses. As we have seen throughout the book of Revelation there have been several climactic world ending events that have been described for us with the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls. We envision that all of the following events are happening in and around the return of Christ and the Battle of Armageddon:

The 6th Seal – Revelation 6:12-17

The Final Harvest – Revelation 14:14-20

The Final Summary – Revelation 20:7-10

The 7th Seal – Revelation 8:1-5

The 7th Trumpet – Revelation 11:15-19

The 7th Bowl – Revelation 16:17-21

Because of the nature of these climactic events, they all appear to be surrounding the end of the current world. As we discussed in Chapter 14 “The Final Harvest” could be interpreted as a midtribulation rapture instead and as we will talk about in Chapter 20 “The Final Summary” could be understood as a battle at the end of the Millennium. Although we may not know the specific order or details of all of the final events we are assured of two primary facts by God’s communication to John in this chapter. #1 The celebration and victory of the saints at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and #2 The sorrow and judgment experienced by God’s enemies at the Great Supper of God. We know there will be much more happening and transpiring over a longer period of time than we understand, especially as we consider all of the Old Testament and its discussion of the “Day of the Lord”. Regardless of how the chapter is divided up, it is one of the greatest chapters in all of God’s Word. It is the victory of the Lamb. It is the celebration of the saints. It is the defeat of the enemy. It is the culmination of all of God’s promises. It is the worship of heaven. It is the return of the King. It is Jesus coming for His bride. It is the last battle. It is just how the angels said it would be at the Ascension “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11b)

V.1-3 The Saints As Revelation 19 begins we are told of a great multitude in heaven crying out and worshipping God. There is not a distinction made between angels and saints so I envision both being present but either could be viewed here. The focus is supposed to be on God who has destroyed Babylon and freed God’s people forever. The praises begin with a Hallelujah which repeats three more times in this chapter (v.1, v.3, v.4, v.6). These are the only places in all of the New Testament where we find the word Hallelujah. Of course, it is included throughout the Old Testament but only in the book of Revelation for the New Testament. The word literally means to “hallel” “yah” or praise Yahweh and in Hebrew it is translated with an ‘H’

but in the Greek language of the New Testament there is no 'h' (alleluia). We also see that this very first verse emphasizes the extreme characteristics of God that are only attributed to Him alone. We might say that first responders have saved or that kings have glory or that generals have power but John makes it clear to distinguish that these are attributes in their fullness that belong to God alone as he uses the definite article to accentuate. God is praised for 'the' salvation, 'the' glory, and 'the' power. They ultimately belong to Him alone. The focus of these verses is on the accomplishment of Babylon's judgment and that God is true and just in His destruction of it and again reminds us that their demise is permanent as we recognize the smoke from her will go up forever and ever. I don't know how this will play out in the new heavens and the new earth, but I imagine that there will always be one place that has smoke rising from it that people will know and remember what happened to the Harlot.

V.4-5 The Elders & the Four Living Creatures In this middle section of praise we are told specifically that it involves the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures as they fall down to worship God. They cry out 'Hallelujah' and from the throne we hear a voice saying "praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." We are reminded that as we worship God that everyone is included from the most important to the least and we never hear God respond with the idea that it is enough. If anything, we hear the encouragement that it is right and just so to do. "It is truly meet, right, and salutary, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God." (The Common Service 1888)

V.6-8 The Angels This section of verses introduces us to another multitude which may in fact be the same multitude as earlier verses but I envision the angels praising God for the Bride who has been made ready. This is also the section of Scripture where we see the Hallelujah chorus used in Handel's Messiah. The references for this chorus all come from the book of Revelation – For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth (Revelation 19:6); The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15); He shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 11:15); King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16).

The Bride has clothed herself with fine linen which is described as bright and pure and equated with the righteous deeds of the saints. Therefore, we know that the Bride is the Church and it is this group that is invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This day has been anticipated, planned, and foretold for centuries and it is finally here – "the marriage of the Lamb has come". You thought you had a long engagement. Jesus went away to prepare a place for His bride and now the time has finally come. The banquet is ready, the groom has arrived, and the bride is all dressed up and ready to go. Hallelujah! We are reminded of the vivid wedding imagery from Biblical times that is being fulfilled. The betrothal period was often an unknown number of days where the bride and groom were considered married but had not officially consummated the relationship. The groom would often pay a price for the bride and then go away to prepare a home for them. The bride was to get ready for the wedding and may know an approximate timing for his return but would not usually know exactly when the groom would come. The bride's job was to remain faithful to the groom and to make herself ready for whenever her knight in shining armor would show up. The groom would then return at an undisclosed time for the wedding. The wedding feast would be grand and glorious and often last for up to seven days. All of these characteristics relate to Jesus' courtship, return, and celebration with His Bride the Church.

V.9-10 The Marriage Supper An angel specifically says to John “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Many are called but few are chosen and only the chosen will receive an invitation to the marriage supper. All are invited to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior but only those who have accepted that invitation get this special invitation to Christ’s supper. They have made themselves ready and they are going to the best after party that ever existed. Who are those who are invited? It appears that the marriage supper begins just before Christ’s second coming although we can’t be sure, but this would mean that any believers still alive when Christ returns at the Battle of Armageddon either would have a different privilege or they would be late to the party. Regardless, the angel confirms that “these are the true words of God.” John is so overcome by this realization about the true Word of God that he begins to bow in worship and he is immediately corrected by the angel. The angel then clearly explains the distinction and that only God is ever to be worshiped. Then he tells John that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Basically, he is saying – don’t worship me it is Jesus’ words that are true and prophetic – I’m just the messenger. This reminds us that any real or true prophecy originates from the testimony and witness of Jesus Christ. It is never the person or the messenger which devises it or is to be worshiped for it. All true prophecy comes from Christ and He is the one to be worshiped for it. As we transition from the Marriage Supper of the Lamb to the return of Christ in the next section be reminded that Jesus has already paid the bridal price and paid your way to the banquet table. Christ’s command is be ready, don’t give up or quit, and look forward to His arrival.

V.11-16 The Return As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter this verse begins the next section of Scripture where John sees seven visions consisting of the seven last things. We will look at this entire section in more detail in Chapter 20 but for now we recognize a significant transition to what John sees. This passage of verses is one of the most profound and remarkable pictures found in all of Scripture. Some have proposed that it is even too wonderful and magnificent to even comment about. Although, I agree about its significance I will try and add some complimentary information that will hopefully make these words even more meaningful and memorable for you. The very first verse summarizes well why Jesus is coming again – “he judges and makes war”. In Jesus’ first appearance we are reminded of one of the most memorable passages about the reason for Jesus’ arrival “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) If there was one verse that summarizes why Jesus came the first time this would be it. If there was one verse that describes why Jesus is coming the second time, I believe it would be Revelation 19:11 “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True and in righteousness he judges and makes war.” When Jesus comes back the second time He will not be coming back to save – He will be coming back to judge and make war. That doesn’t sound very typical of Jesus, but that is one of the reasons why we are studying the book of Revelation so that we can balance the view of meek and mild baby Jesus who wouldn’t hurt a fly with the coming King who will ‘judge and make war’. We have discussed this in detail in Chapter 5 where Jesus is revealed as the Lion and the Lamb but it is important for us to continue to keep a balanced view of who Jesus is and what He will do so that we are not given to error. If we believe Jesus is too weak then He can’t combat sin, but if we believe that Jesus is too strong then He has no place in His heart for the sinner. Jesus is both perfectly weak when He needs to be weak and strong when He needs to be strong.

Verse 12 reminds us of the vision that John saw of Jesus with His eyes as a flame of fire in Chapter 1. In this chapter though John sees Jesus wearing “many” crowns and also with a name which he says “no one knows”. It could be that this is a name that John is not familiar with or it could be that he knew instinctively that no one should know it or that he was told not to communicate it. In any case it is significant and now we know that the revelation of Jesus will continue for us regardless of how much we study our Bibles because there will always be more to learn about and from our precious Savior. In verse 13 we see that He is dressed in a robe with blood on it and it is probably not His own. Although it would be an appropriate reminder of Jesus’ sacrifice for us to see Him with His own blood, in this case He is being pictured as treading the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God. As we have seen from Isaiah 63 and Psalm 2 Jesus is not coming to negotiate or slap His enemies on the wrist or escort them to jail. They have had the opportunity to repent and they have refused. Jesus is coming to destroy all those who oppose His rule. We are told that Jesus is accompanied by the armies of heaven. There is disagreement among commentators whether these are angels or saints but it is possible that both are present. Some scholars say angels because they are described as an army and they are wearing white linen which is slightly different than the linen we see the Bride wearing. On the other hand, where would you rather be than riding to victory with the Lord Jesus Christ? It is possible that the Bride would be left in heaven at the celebration of the wedding feast, but I’d rather be with Jesus. Maybe we’ll get to decide? In either event you will be safe, secure, and well taken care of in the courts of heaven or riding by Jesus side. Before the next vision that John sees we are reminded that Jesus can do this because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We saw in Revelation 17 that Babylon and the antichrist kingdom could not defeat the Lamb and here we see that all of the armies of the world are no match for Him either. There are kings and there are rulers and there are powers and there are dominions but Jesus has been raised to the right hand of the Father “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.” (Ephesians 1:21)

V.17-18 The Supper of God The second vision that John sees is an angel “standing in the sun” calling to all of the birds to come to the Great Supper of God. This is a prophetic act by the angel as he calls on the birds to come and eat the flesh of the armies of men before the battle even begins. In fact, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is also prophetic in nature as you would normally think of a celebration feast following the last battle instead of preceding it. Because Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords He is able to celebrate before He begins and finish before He starts.

The contrast between these two suppers is palpable and obviously intentional. If you were to look up a picture of poetic justice in the dictionary you should find it there. The saints who have been persecuted, mistreated, and martyred are celebrating at one of the greatest feasts ever given and the armies of the antichrist are a feast. I know it’s gross and horrific but so is what the antichrist has done to God’s people for thousands of years. God will have the last word and this is it “Come, Gather for the Great Supper.”

V.19-21 The Last Battle The last thing that John sees in this chapter is the conclusion of the battle. It’s really not a battle at all. It is just what happens. There is a great army but there is no great war. It is quick and painless at least for now until they are raised to eternal damnation in the lake of fire. The antichrist and the false prophet receive no mercy of a quick death and are thrown directly into the lake of fire – alive! We are told that the armies are slain

by the sword that came from the mouth of Jesus. We are not told if this is literal though or if it is a representation of the prophetic utterances that He spoke to bring the destructions that we saw in the 7th Seal, Trumpet, and Bowl. Regardless, Jesus has clearly done all of the work and He uses the sword of His mouth to accomplish it. We have seen this verse before but it is clear that Paul has the same idea in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that John is describing for us. “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.”

Battle Hymn Of The Republic

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

https://www.calvarychapelontario.com/files/The_Ancient_Jewish_Wedding.pdf

[Jesus Christ - the Lamb of Revelation - Alpha and Omega Ministries \(aomin.org\)](http://www.alphaandomega.org/)

['Messiah': The Story Behind Handel's Masterpiece \(udiscovermusic.com\)](http://www.udiscovermusic.com/)