

Chapter 19

In the preceding chapter there was the final judgment upon “Babylon”. The chapter ends with an angel instructing the saints to rejoice. This chapter continues with that theme but introduces a number of significant new events.

The Worship Scene of Heaven

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

“After these things” = the beginning of a new vision.

John’s attention is directed to a new vision after the angel’s instruction in 18:20-24. The hosts of heaven obey the angels call to rejoice.

“Alleluia”

This is a transliteration of the Hebrew word Hallelujah. It appears only here in the New Testament. It appears four times in this chapter. Hallelujah is a compound word in Hebrew. *Halal* = to praise and *Jah* = God, thus *Praise God or Praise the Lord*.

John Phillips noted:

“Although it occurs twenty-four times in the Old Testament, this is the first time the word *hallelujah* occurs in the New Testament. It simply means “praise the Lord!”¹

The prayer of the saints had been fully answered here and their response was one of worship. Notice the things which they attribute to God: “Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God.”

Regarding salvation, John MacArthur observed, "The word salvation does not focus on justification or sanctification, but celebrates the final aspect of salvation history, the glorification of the saints in the kingdom of Christ."²

²For 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.

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring Revelation: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004) 227.

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Revelation 12-22* (Chicago: Moody, 2000) 197.

“Corrupt the earth with her fornication” means that the beast and false prophet lured humanity into immorality. While people are responsible for their choices that are sinful, the one who lures or is complicit in luring people to sin, will certainly be judged. Note the judgment is for corrupting the world with immorality but also involves judgment for the slaughter of God’s children. See 6:10

³And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

“And her smoke rose up for ever and ever”

MacArthur noted: “That this judgment is final, permanent and irreversible.”³

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

The 24 elders and the four (4) living creatures join in the worship. What a worship scene this must have been for John.

Phillips observed:

This is the last time the elders and the living creatures are mentioned in the Apocalypse. They appear first when the throne, symbolic of the sovereignty of God, is introduced; and they appear now at the very end of things, to say a hearty Amen to God’s judgments and a warm Hallelujah because of the glorious triumph of His throne.⁴

⁵And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. ⁶And 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.

“A voice came out of the throne”

This voice is not identified but is most likely that of an angel since the voice calls upon all saints to praise God.

“The voice of a great multitude”

The innumerable host that will be praising God began with the angelic hosts, then the elders and four living creatures and now all the saints. Such a number of beings praising God would indeed be unimaginable.

So one observes a crescendo of praise that will reverberate throughout all of heaven.

³ Ibid, 199.

⁴ Phillips, *Exploring Revelation*, 228.

The Marriage of the Lamb

⁷Let 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.

“For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

MacArthur illustrated the ancient Hebrew custom of marriage:

Marriages “consisted of three distinct stages. First was the betrothal (engagement)...the second stage of a wedding was the presentation, a time of festivities just before the actual ceremony...The third and most significant stage...was the actual ceremony. After the ceremony would come a final meal, followed by the consummation of the marriage.”⁵

He further elaborated on the Marriage Supper:

Betrothed in eternity past, presented in the Father’s house since the Rapture, the church is now ready for the wedding ceremony to begin. That ceremony will coincide with the establishment of the millennial kingdom, and stretch throughout that thousand year period to be finally consummated in the new heavens and the new earth.⁶

But who is the Bride to whom John mentions? Phillips offered:

Considerable controversy has raged over the identity of the bride. Some claim the bride is Israel, others that she is the church. It is true that in the Old Testament Israel was said to be the wife of Jehovah; but it was Hosea’s great lament that she was divorced for her profligacies and repeated infidelities. Though in a coming day the divorced wife will be forgiven, cleansed, and restored, that hardly satisfies the scene now described. What we have here is the bringing together at last of Christ and His Church. Paul declares that his ministry was to espouse believers to Christ so that, as the church, they might be presented to Him as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2). All believers from Pentecost to the rapture are seen collectively and symbolically as the bride of Christ.⁷

⁸And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. ⁹And 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.

“To her was granted”

⁵ MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, 12-22, 201

⁶ Ibid, 203.

⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring Revelation*, 228.

Note that to her was granted. God granted his grace to the church. Christ's righteousness was imputed to every true believer. It is because of Christ's Righteousness that the Church can be declared pure and spotless.

"For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Because of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the saints will also come into a state of perfection.

"Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb"

"Blessed" means happy, joyous or satisfied. But who is it that shall be the invited guests to the marriage supper of the Lamb?

MacArthur makes a good argument that since the Church is the Bride, who are the guests? He argues that it will be all the Old Testament saints. MacArthur points out some object to this idea. The marriage of the Lamb is a picture of God's intimacy with His people.

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

John was overcome with awe and adoration and fell down at the angel's feet and began to worship the angel. The angel quickly rebukes John and confirms that he is a servant of God like John. God is the only one to be worshipped. Thus, those who would worship angels are violating Scripture. God alone is worthy of our worship.

The Second Coming of Christ

¹¹And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

¹² His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ¹³And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

"I saw heaven opened"

John had seen heaven opened in chapter 4:1 but this time, the heaven was opened to let Jesus out, not to let John look in.

“A white horse” = The Steed of victory that was ridden by the Roman soldiers. Christ will be the victor in this case, however.”

The Names of the Rider

- ❖ “Faithful and True
- ❖ Word of God
- ❖ King of Kings and Lord of Lords

There is no doubt who the Rider is on the White Horse. He is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He came to earth, suffered humiliation, rode a donkey into Jerusalem, and was rejected and crucified. This time he is coming as the Triumphant King.

See Matthew 24:27-31

It is very important that one understands this will be the Second Coming of Christ to the earth. “The Rapture which takes place approximately seven years before the Second coming are often confused. The “Parousia” or the snatching away occurs prior to the Great Tribulation, whereas the Second Coming where Christ will literally return to the physical planet to establish His Millennial Reign occurs at the end of the Tribulation.

The Carnage of Armageddon

Chapter 19 begins with a worship service in anticipation of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with His Bride, but there is another Supper revealed in Chapter 19, namely the “Supper of the great God.”

¹⁷And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; ¹⁸That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great. ¹⁹And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

“Standing in the sun”

This means in mid heaven. As if perhaps to eclipse the sun. Note that the victory is already announced due to the fact that the angel is inviting all the birds to come and feast on the dead carcasses of kings and military personnel.

This is the Battle of Armageddon in greater detail. See Ezek. 39:17-20

To leave a person's body open to the elements was the ultimate indignity and insult. But the slaughter at Armageddon will be unprecedented in the history of humanity.

Note that the beast, i.e., the Anti-Christ will lead the assault against Christ and His army in verse 19. What an exercise in futility. The deluded Anti-Christ will entertain the thought that he can thwart Christ's coming.

The Beast and False Prophet's End

²⁰And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

It was over before it began. Note that the beast and the false prophet were taken and cast alive into the lake of fire.

Those who remained, i.e., the kings of the earth and all their soldiers were killed not by a military weapon but by the very Word of God.

Phillips noted:

Then suddenly it will all be over. In fact, there will be no war at all, in the sense that we think of war. There will be just a word spoken from Him who sits astride the great white horse. Once He spoke a word to a fig tree, and it withered away . . . Now He speaks a word, and the war is over. The blasphemous, loud-mouthed Beast is stricken where he stands. The false prophet, the miracle-working windbag from the pit is punctured and still. The pair of them are bundled up and hurled headlong into the everlasting flames. Another word, and the panic-stricken armies reel and stagger and fall down dead. Field marshals and generals, admirals and air commanders, soldiers and sailors, rank and file, one and all—they fall. And the vultures descend and cover the scene. Thus ends the Battle of Armageddon! For a thousand years there will be on the earth after that.⁸

Dr. Bill R. Scott, pastor
Columbia Baptist Church

⁸ Phillips, *Exploring Revelation*, 236.