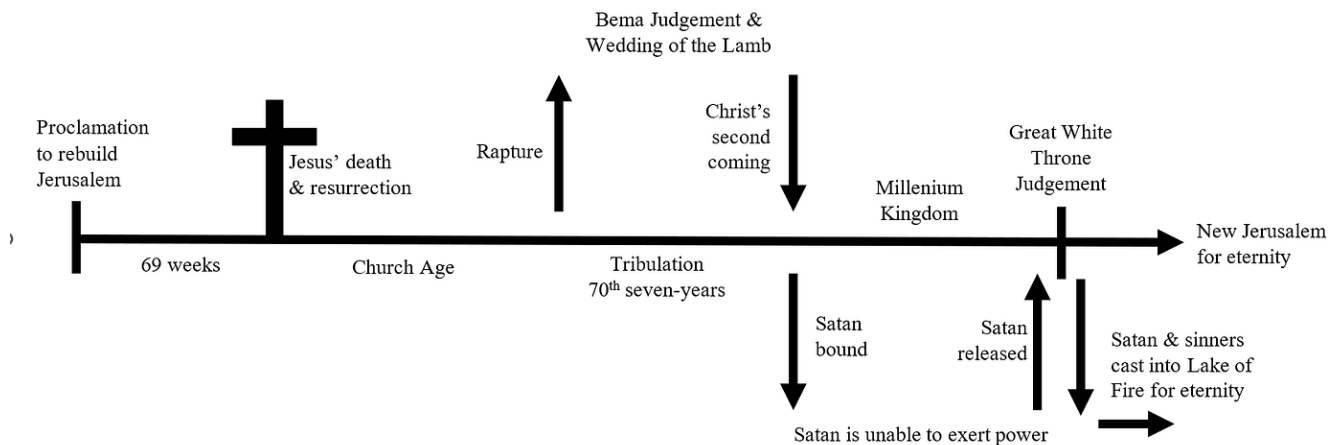


WEEK 23: CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 19

- The timing of chapter 19 is just before the 2nd coming of Jesus to the earth.
- Chapter 19 marks the ending of God's Tribulation judgments with the Battle of Armageddon.
- J. Vernon McGee gives this description of chapter 19, "...marks a dramatic change in the tone of Revelation. The destruction of Babylon, the capital of the Beast's kingdom, marks the end of the Great Tribulation. The somber gives way to song. The transfer is from darkness to light, from black to white, from dreary days of judgment to bright days of blessing. This chapter makes a definite bifurcation in Revelation, and ushers in the greatest event for this earth—the Second Coming of Christ. It is the bridge between the Great Tribulation and the Millennium."



- "...just as God cleansed the earth with a global flood in Genesis before establishing a new start, Revelation 6–18 represents a global cleansing of the 'Babylonian system' before Christ establishes His millennial kingdom in Chapter 19 and 20. In order for the literal fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies to be fulfilled and the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants to stand, the destructive anti-God empires of Chapter 18 must be completely eradicated. This way Jesus can physically reign over man on earth."¹
- Chapter 19 is the end of the parenthesis in the story line. Chapters 17-18 were giving more details as to what was happening to the world and the judgment of Babylon.
- Now we get to the end of the 7 bowl judgments and Jesus returning to earth.

¹ Paraphrased from Michael Vlach

CHAPTER 19:1-6 ~ THE RESOUNDING PRAISE TO GOD ALMIGHTY

Revelation 19:1-6 “After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "**Hallelujah!** Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; [2] **BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS**; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and **HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER.**" [3] And a second time they said, "**Hallelujah!** **HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER.**" [4] And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen.

Hallelujah!" [5] And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." [6] Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "**Hallelujah!** For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns."

- Again, take note of John's words, *after these things*, after the fall of Babylon on earth, John hears what is taking place in heaven.
- The great multitude in heaven breaks out with Hallelujah!
 - This group is most likely the same group from the martyred Tribulation saints.
 - **Revelation 7:9** “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands...”
 - The reason for these Tribulation saints to rejoice is in **verse 2**...God's judgment upon the Babylon and all those who supported her.
 - It is as if God answers the *how long O Lord* question that they martyrs asked in Revelation 6:10.
- “The ascription of praise is followed by a second alleluia and the statement that the smoke of Babylon will continue to rise forever. This cannot refer to the city itself, but will be fulfilled by a perpetual judgment of the people who engaged in her wicked deeds.” (Walvoord)
- The 3rd Hallelujah is by the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures (from 4:6-8).
 - “If the twenty-four elders represent the church, they are witnesses of these events from heaven even though they have not participated in quite the same way.” (Walvoord)
- The 4th Hallelujah in **verses 5-6** is called out from the throne of God and commands to all the servants of God to praise Him.
 - It's not certain who these bond-servants are, but we know they fear the Lord and break out in praise to Him.
 - Even John uses the word “like” 3 times trying to describe what he heard from this particular group.

- The 4-fold purposes for the praise of God in heaven:
 - **Verse 1** the salvation of God for His people
 - **Verses 2-3** the righteous judgments of God against those who oppose His people
 - **Verse 4** He Himself is worthy of praise
 - **Verse 6** His mighty reign

CHAPTER 19:7-10 ~ THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

Revelation 19:7-10 “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” [8] It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. [9] Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.” [10] Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

- There are two separate views as to where this marriage supper is going to take place...either in heaven or on earth. While it is not a point of contention, the overall fact is that whether in heaven or on earth, the saints are going to be celebrating with Jesus at a feast that we cannot even imagine.
- Most dispensational Bible teachers would say that while the marriage supper starts either right before or after Jesus’ 2nd coming, it extends throughout the whole Millennial reign of Christ.
 - “This symbolic meal will take place at the establishment of the millennial kingdom and last throughout that 1,000 year period.”²
- In a normal reading of the text of Revelation 19, the marriage supper of the Lamb follows the judgement seat of Christ (the Bema seat of 2 Corinthians 5:10) and is before Jesus’ 2nd coming (19:11-16).
- “What John’s vision in **Revelation 19** seems to indicate is that the wedding ceremony has just taken place in Heaven, because when Christ returns to earth and the bride with Him, we are already dressed in our wedding garments.”³
- “The marriage symbolism is beautifully fulfilled in the relationship of Christ to His church. The wedding contract is consummated at the time the church is redeemed. Every true Christian is joined to Christ in a legal marriage. When Christ comes for His church at the rapture, the second phase of the wedding is fulfilled, namely, the Bridegroom goes to receive His bride. The third phase then follows, that is, the

² *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Re 19:7.

³ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-53/?srsltid=AfmBOooDm8C-wFNBEeQ7Ygx-qeXNkhboQrnns2EjeGg7auxfX5xJPUBl>

wedding feast. Here it is significant to note that the bride is already the wife of the Lamb, that is, the bridegroom has already come for His bride prior to His second coming described in 19:11-16. That which is here announced is not the wedding union but the wedding feast.” (Walvoord)

- Currently, Christ (bridegroom) and the church (bride) are separated, Christ in heaven...the church on earth.
- It is at this joyous celebration that the church will have a formal and eternal relationship with Jesus.
- The three phases of the marriage ceremony that Walvoord mentioned are important:
 - **The Betrothal**...the contract between families by the parents that legally bound the (usually) underage children to one another.
 - **Matthew 1:18** “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.”
 - For those who are born again, this occurred in eternity past when God wrote names in the Book of Life.
 - **Ephesians 1:4** “...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him...”
 - **Revelation 13:8** “All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”
 - **The Presentation**...when the bride and groom came to marriage age, the bridegroom would come for his bride and take her back to his home and prepare for the ceremony.
 - **Matthew 25:5-6** “Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. [6] But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’”
 - For the church, this happens at the time of the Rapture.
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”
 - This trumpet is not the trumpets of Revelation, this is a trumpet of God not of angels. This trumpet was blown when the bridegroom came back for his bride, signifying the ending of the waiting period.

- **The Ceremony**...after vows were exchanged, after the ceremony all the guests came and participated in the celebratory feast.
 - This is seen at the wedding which took place in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-10).
 - For the church, this is what is taking place in chapter 19:7-10.
- “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...The idea of a thousand-year-long ceremony may seem far-fetched; yet it is no more difficult than several thousand years of betrothal...In the new heavens and the new earth, the bride concept will be expanded to include not only the church, but also all the redeemed of all ages as the New Jerusalem becomes the bridal city (21:1-2).”⁴
- The bride (the church) has made herself ready...not by her own works but because of Christ.
- “In verse 8 a beautiful picture is drawn of the holiness and righteousness of the church in that hour, for the bride is described as arrayed in “fine linen, clean and white.” We are not left to imagine what this means, for the interpretation is given: “for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” The word for “righteousness” is the word for righteous deeds and is in the plural. The reference, therefore, seems to be not to justification by faith but rather to the righteousness wrought in the lives of the saints who comprise the wife of the Lamb.” (Walvoord)
- When we are born again, we have Christ’s righteousness imputed to us, now the church is clothing herself in the fine linen which are her righteous deeds.
 - Here is the beautiful picture that John is painting for us...while we are saved by grace, it truly is a free gift from God...the garment which we are given here is based upon our choices today.
 - It is through our small acts of obedience, our quiet prayers, our endurance through life’s trials and 1000’s of other seemingly insignificant righteous choices that believers are rewarded for.
 - Perhaps this is the outcome of the Bema Seat of judgment from 2 Corinthians 5:10. Jesus has taken those “raw righteous works” and made them into a beautiful fine linen for each of us to wear.
 - One author wrote, “How true it is, we weave on earth what we wear in heaven. Sometimes the reality of that has not sunk in, that how we use the gifts God gave us on earth will determine the way we are presented with the bridegroom when He comes. This is a challenging thought. It reminds me of the familiar lines, ‘Only one life, ‘twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.’”
- There’s an interesting phrase here that John I told to write...*blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*

⁴ John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22*, 203.

- The church was not invited to the celebration; we were Raptured or snatched away.
 - The “bride” does not receive an invitation to her own wedding.
- There is a distinction between the church and those who were invited to the ceremony.
- “One of the false interpretations that has plagued the church is the concept that God treats all saints exactly alike. Instead, a literal interpretation of the Bible distinguishes different groups of saints, and here the bride is distinguished from those who are invited to the wedding supper. Instead of treating all alike, God indeed has a program for Israel as a nation and also for those in Israel who are saved. He also has a program for Gentiles in the Old Testament who come to faith in God. And in the New Testament He has a program for the church as still a different group of saints. Again in the Book of Revelation the Tribulation saints are distinguished from other previous groups. It is not so much a question of difference in blessings as it is that God has a program designed for each group of saints which corresponds to their particular relationship to His overall program. Here the church, described as a bride, will be attended by angels and by saints who are distinct from the bride.” (Walvoord)
- “The dispensational distinction between the saints of the present age belonging to the church, the Body of Christ, and the saints of other ages, such as those in the Old Testament or those in the future tribulation, therefore seems to be observed in this passage where the wife is distinguished from the great multitude identified in chapter 7 as martyrs out of the great tribulation. The ‘marriage of the Lamb’ is properly the marriage supper of the Lamb, the final aspect of the marriage relationship between Christ and His church.” (Walvoord)
 - **John 3:29** “He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.”
 - John the Baptist will be at the feast, but not as part of the church. He died before Jesus did, but he is still a friend of the bridegroom.
- “Some may question why the church age believers should be granted the honor of being the bride, while believers from other ages are merely guests. But one may equally ask why God singled out Israel to be the covenant people. The only answer to both questions is that God sovereignly purposed that it be so (cf. Deut 7:7-8)...There will be no ‘second class citizens’ in God’s kingdom, just as all the participants in a wedding enjoy the celebration.”⁵
- Old Testament saints will be resurrected at the end of the Tribulation so that they are the guests at this wedding ceremony and are able to enjoy the celebration.
- John falls at the feet of the angel in order to worship him (verse 10) in response to all he has seen and heard.

⁵ MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22*, 204

- The angel simply corrects John and tells him to worship God.
- In the debate about the timing of the Rapture (there should be no debate about an actual Rapture), the marriage supper gives overwhelming support for a pretribulation position.
- Since there are two major events that the Bible says is going to happen before the 2nd coming of Christ, there must be *time* for them to happen.
 - The Bema Seat of Jesus and His judgment of the saints.
 - The marriage supper of the Lamb and His church.
- It is only a pretribulation rapture position that gives time for these two events to happen as the Bible says.

CHAPTER 19:11-16 ~ THE KING OF KINGS AND HIS ARMY

Revelation 19:11-16 “And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. [12] His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. [13] He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. [14] And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. [15] From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. [16] And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.’”

- John introduces Jesus...he sees Jesus coming out of the heavens and riding a white horse.
 - “During victory celebrations like these, Rome would decorate everything they could with white fabric, white flowers – Juvenal, the Roman poet living during the time of John the Apostle, referred to these times when Rome would become ‘a city in white.’”⁶
 - “As is made clear in these prophecies, the second coming of Christ will be a glorious event which all the world will behold, both believers and unbelievers. It is compared to lightning that shines from the east to the west, in other words, illuminating the whole heaven.” (Walvoord)
- John tells us that He is called *Faithful and True* and He judges and wages war in righteousness.
- The first time that Jesus came He was a baby in a manger...now we are going to see that He is a conquering King who is ready for war a righteous war against His enemies.
- Speaking on **verses 12-13**, Walvoord writes, “These attributes are demonstrated in the appearance of Christ as described in the following verses. In verse 12 His eyes are as a flame of fire, a term previously used to

⁶ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-54>

describe Christ in 1:14 and 2:18. This speaks of His righteous judgment upon sin. His head is crowned with many crowns, or diadems, the symbol of sovereignty. He possesses a name which no man knows, as yet unrevealed. His vesture is declared to be “dipped in blood,” as if anticipating the bloodshed to come (cf. Isa. 63:2-3; Rev. 14:20). Christ as the slain Lamb in Revelation speaks of redemption by blood; here blood represents divine judgment upon wicked men. The name given to Christ in verse 13 is “The Word of God” The Word of God, who according to John 1:1-3 is the Creator, is here also the Judge of man.”

Differences between the Rapture of the Church and Jesus’ 2nd Coming

Feature / Dimension	The Rapture of the Church	The Second Coming of Christ
The Core Event	Christ comes for His saints.	Christ comes with His saints.
Location of Christ	He meets believers in the air .	His feet touch the Mount of Olives .
Visibility	It happens secretly/instantaneously .	Every eye on earth will see Him .
Timing	Imminent; can happen at any moment .	Predicted; occurs at the end of Tribulation .
Purpose	To rescue and snatch away believers.	To judge the earth and set up His kingdom.
Earthly Impact	Earth experiences chaos and deception .	Earth experiences justice and perfect peace .
Key Bible Verses	1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52	Revelation 19:11-16; Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 24:30

- In **verse 14** the armies from heaven are coming with Jesus.
 - Just take note, they are not coming with battle array to partake in war, but rather they were following their leader to rule and reign with Him.
 - **1 Corinthians 6:2** “Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?”
 - Not only the OT saints, the church saints and the Tribulation saints, but also angels.
 - **Matthew 25:31** “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.”
- Speaking of the word “sword” in **verse 15**, Walvoord states, “Here the word is used symbolically to represent a sharp instrument of war with which Christ will smite the nations and establish His absolute rule.

The expression of ruling “with a rod of iron” is also found in Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 2:27, with a similar expression, “the rod of his mouth,” in Isaiah 11:4. It represents unyielding, absolute government under which men are required to conform to the righteous standards of God.”

- “For the believer the timeline is now complete; a rapture – or a resurrection – a reunion – a return – and the reign of Christ. For the church, her days of conflict, rejection, persecution and rejection are over.”⁷
- With these two titles, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, there is again a declaration of Jesus’ sovereignty and deity.
- This would have been something for John to see. The common practice in his day was for the Caesars to call themselves king and lord.
- Perhaps this is what the rulers of the Tribulation age were calling themselves as well.
- Jesus declares that His total power and authority over all earthly established rulers.
- Like Paul wrote, **Titus 2:11-13** “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, [12] instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, [13] looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus...”

CHAPTER 19:17-19 ~ THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Revelation 19:17-19 “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God, [18] so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.” [19] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”

- This is the great battle at the end of the Tribulation. It is not great as in it is going to take a long time or that it is going to be a “back-and-forth” battle.
- It is great because by the Word of His mouth, Jesus is going to completely and utterly destroy all the armies of the WORLD who have come up against Him.
- The slaughter is going to be so great that the angel in **verse 17** calls out to the birds to come over and feast on the flesh of the millions upon millions who came against Jesus. The supper provided by God.

⁷ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-54>

- It is interesting that the word “supper” in **verse 17** is the same word used when talking about the marriage supper of the Lamb. They stand in total contrast to one another.
- “Those who attend the wedding feast of the Lamb – the believers – will be *at* the supper; those who march against Christ at Armageddon will *be* the supper.”⁸

CHAPTER 19:20-21 ~ THE DOOM OF THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET

Revelation 19:20-21 “And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. [21] And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

- Somewhere between **verses 19-20** is the beginning *and* the ending of this battle. It doesn’t take long.
- Jesus makes a public spectacle of the beast and the false prophet by throwing them alive into the lake of fire.
- They become the first 2 inhabitants of hell.
- “They become a horrifying prelude to the eternal wrath of God by being thrown alive into the lake of fire. Here’s the point . . . or one of them; unbelievers who influence others in their unbelief will receive a greater penalty. Those who lead others into sin will bear a greater responsibility before God for their evil ways and be subjected to more severe punishment. Yes, there are levels of suffering in Hell...”⁹
- No others in the history of the world have rejected greater light than the beast and false prophet.
- They bypass the “normal” process of death, Hades, and the Great White Throne judgment and cast right there into hell.
- It is interesting that as Revelation moves towards its conclusion, the scales of God’s justice are being revealed to mankind.
- There are rewards for our righteous acts here on earth. We are going to be clothed according to those rewards.
- Conversely, there are variations of punishments according to not just the wickedness of unbelievers, but how they influence others to follow in their sin.

⁸ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-55>

⁹ Ibid.