

Revelation 19 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

We're now in the home stretch in our study in Revelation.

Chs. 17 & 18 were the last turn on the track of the *Great Tribulation* as they showed us the destruction of what's referred to as "Babylon" – which is nothing less than the age-old satanic conspiracy to unite the entire world in global rebellion against God.

Ch. 17 described the fate of the one-world religious system at the mid-point of the Trib.

Ch. 18 showed the fate of the one-world political/economic system at the end of the Trib.

Both of these systems, the religious and the political, have been long in the design and manufacture.

The seeds of *ecumenicalism*, of bringing the religions of the world together in one overarching religious faith, were planted in the fertile soil of 19th century liberalism.

Various groups have been at work for decades trying to bring different faiths together on common ground.

Over the last 20 years, the UN has taken the initiative and has worked feverishly to try to bring about a *one-world spirituality*.

When we were studying this a couple weeks ago, I mentioned the *Earth Charter* that's the brain child of such folk as Mikhail Gorbachev and Steven Rockefeller.

It's meant to be the Constitution of Global Government, uniting mankind in one over-arching religious, political, and economic whole.

What I find fascinating is where the Earth Charter has been placed!

It now sits in the Ark of Hope – a replica of the Ark of the Covenant which was the center of the Jewish Temple and represented the throne of God.

Here it is – [pictures]

During the first half of the Tribulation, as the antichrist is moving to consolidate his control, he will *use* religion and the ecumenical movement as a way to increase and solidify his rule.

Once all the pieces are in place at the mid-point of the Tribulation, and the temple in Jerusalem has been rebuilt, he will enter the Holy of holies, set up an image of himself there, and demand that the world recognize and worship him as the god-object of the one-world religion.

As ch. 17 says, he'll sweep away any of the religious hierarchy & leadership that opposes him, and commandeer all religious properties and holdings.

As we saw in ch. 13, it's at that point that he installs his new economic system – which requires the mark of the beast in order to be involved in the commercial world of buying and selling.

Do you see what happens? The age old battle between religion and the state is finally won by the state.

For the first half of the Tribulation the antichrist *uses* religion to secure his power base.

But as soon as it's secure, he dispenses with religion and elevates his political & economic system to the place of pre-eminence, with himself as the focal point of loyalty & worship.

The state becomes God, with the state being embodied in the *man of sin*.

But this state of affairs is brief. It only lasts for 3½ years.

Then God says, "Okay, that's enough."

Ch. 19 tells us that part of the story . . .

CHAPTER 19

1After these things . . .

These words mark a *change*.

Up to this point, the bulk of the book has been visions of God's judgments on a rebellious world.

Some of that judgment has taken the form of the simple *results* of evil choices – of God letting the earth-dwellers experience the natural consequences of rejecting the Way of Life.

Other judgments have been the *direct action* of God's wrath letting loose catastrophe.

But the point of it all has been to confront rebel mankind with the folly of rejecting the Lord.

Now the theme of the book changes because it moves to speak of

God's plan for His own.

When John says, "*After these things . . .*" he means first of all, after the visions of judgment on Religious & Commercial Babylon in chs. 17 & 18 -

But also, after all the visions of judgment that stretch all the way back to ch. 6.

¹After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God!

²For true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her."

All of heaven breaks out in resounding worship & praise because the great pretender to truth & fulfillment, here called *the great harlot*, has been put down.

In Ch. 18, v. 20 we read this -

"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

Vs. 1-6 of ch. 19 are the response to this call for praise at the fall of the harlot.

Here in vs. 1 & 2, *the great harlot* is the sum of all that is evil & false & an expression of rebellion against God.

It's the movement of man trying to raise himself to the level of God.

It was first suggested by Satan in the Garden of Eden and finds its summit and culmination in the Tribulation under the leadership of a devil-possessed man called the antichrist.

³Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" ⁴And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" ⁵Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

The praise of the angels and saints in heaven knows no bounds.

It just keeps rising higher and higher as the reality & finality of the victory of God becomes clear.

Look at v. 3 –

Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!”

In warfare, even today, but especially in ancient times – what did rising smoke mean? It was a signal of *defeat*.

If you could get a fire started in the city, camp, or ranks of your enemy it was usually a coup.

The final act of conquest a victorious commander would give his troops was to torch the buildings of the vanquished foe.

If you came upon a scene with smoke rising into the sky – it meant the battle was lost and over.

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

John has heard many loud sounds and voices in his visions so far.

But now he brings all the terms he’s used individually into one moment of description.

After the invitation of the voice from the throne in v. 5, calling all of God’s own to praise – all of heaven breaks out in sustained worship and rejoicing.

They cry out – “*Alleluia!*”

This is the Greek form of the Hebrew “*Hallelujah!*” which means *Praise to Yah - Praise to the One Who Is!*

While we use the word “Hallelujah” as praise *itself*, the word is really a *call* or *command* to praise.

Four times in these first 6 verses, we see the hosts of heaven crying out, “Alleluia!”

This is the only time the word is used in the NT and we don’t find the heavenly host singing it until the end of the Tribulation – in imminent anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ.

Look at v. 6 –

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”

The *reason* for their call to praise is because Our All-powerful God is the Lord who reigns!

This is it – that age-old prayer and desire of the people of God from the dawn of creation till the present day is finally being implemented.

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

If you’ve ever been to a major league baseball game, you might have a clue as to the tension and excitement that is building in heaven here.

When you go to the game, you don’t go for the pre-game stuff. There’s batting practice, some minor official stuff and announcements they make as special guests get to walk the field and throw some balls.

The grounds-keepers drag the infield and wet it down.

Then, the announcer introduces the starting players and you know the first pitch is just a couple minutes away.

But when he says, “Everyone please rise for the singing of the *National Anthem*,” you know the next event, the next thing is the game.

Well, here in the Rev. 19, all the preliminary events have taken place.

The field of the earth has been prepared.

All the major players have been introduced.

And now we have the heavenly choir singing the *Universal Anthem* - “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”

All that’s left is for Jesus to walk to the plate and hit one clean over the stands in center field.

⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

In Jewish society, no event was more joyous or the cause of greater

excitement and rejoicing than a wedding!

In fact, may I say that it was during weddings that some of the normal rules governing behavior were somewhat relaxed.

According to Rabbinical teaching, obedience to the commandments was suspended during a wedding celebration if obeying a commandment might lessen the joy of the occasion. People took off work – shops closed – and people ate and drank a whole lot more.

If Jews tended to be rather thrifty and careful at other times, weddings were an excuse to let go, play, and celebrate.

Nothing was to hinder the joy of the wedding feast.

This is why running out of wine was such a grave peril at the wedding in Cana in John 2.

Heaven is absolutely stoked because not only is the 6000 year old rebellion of man at an end, but so also, the long-awaited marriage of the Messiah to His bride has finally come.

Vs. 7 & 8 will be my text for this Sunday, so I'll leave more comment on these fantastic verses till then.

⁹Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

John is instructed at this point to write a *beatitude*.

A special blessing attends those who are *called* or *invited* to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

In this case, those who are invited are the *guests*.

I'll elaborate on this more on Sunday, but for now let me say this . . .

1) Wedding imagery, including the wedding supper was for Jews a familiar image of the Kingdom of God. ^[1]

2) Jesus frequently used wedding imagery in His parables of the kingdom (Mat 22:2ff 25:1-13 Luk 14:15-24)

Finding vs. 7-9, which speak about the marriage supper of the Lamb, here in ch. 19 which tells of the Second Coming of Christ may at first blush give us the impression the Rapture occurs at the *end* of the Tribulation.

It actually works the other way around and affirms a Pre-Tribulation rapture, as we'll see on Sunday.

The point to be made here is that the group being given the blessing in v. 9 is the Tribulation saints and the remnant of Israel which has come to faith in their True Messiah!

When Christ comes from Heaven, as we'll see in a moment, He comes WITH His bride, not FOR her.

The marriage supper has already begun in heaven, and now it is being carried to earth where the number of guests will swell at the feast of Christ's victory and the advent of His Kingdom on earth.

John has been so overwhelmed by all the visions of judgment he's seen, that now that he finally catches a glimpse of the glorious victory of Christ and the consummation of the main prayer of the people of God in every generation – he's run the emotional gamut of human experience and feels undone -

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him.

You can just *feel* John's sense of relief and gratitude that evil has finally been put down and the Messiah's victory is assured.

In an unguarded moment, he falls down at the feet of the one who is speaking to him and begins to worship.

But he said to me, "See *that you do not do that!*"

Notice all the *italic* words in this exclamation of the messenger; that means they're supplied by the translators to give better sense in the English.

But sometimes their attempts at helping give the *sense*, obscure the *emphasis* in the Greek.

Literally, he said – Γῆνά ἰδ· "Hora may - See not!"

This is a quick, intense, and punctuated command –

Equivalent to our "Knock that off! Get up! What are you doing?"

I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The messenger was simply one of the saints in heaven and worship is to be given to God alone!

The last phrase of v. 10 is crucial – "The testimony of Jesus is the

spirit of prophecy.”

The heart and focus of *all* God-inspired prophecy is to promote the message of Christ Jesus!

When we began this book – we saw that John called it the Revelation or unveiling of what?

The last days? Judgment? Catastrophe? Earthquakes, plagues? What?

No – it’s the Revelation, the unveiling of *Jesus Christ!*

The Book of Daniel has been called the *Revelation of the OT.*

What’s the focus and heart of the prophecies in Daniel? The Coming Messiah!

We must ever bear in mind that all *true* prophecy aims at one thing – the exaltation of Christ and promotion of the message of the Gospel!

Any attempt to seek spiritual guidance in perceiving the future that doesn’t aim at the Lord is errant.

Those psychic hotlines and astrological charts are all dangerous things to play with because they open the door to the spiritual realm that does not focus on Christ.

Another caution is our need to be careful that we don’t get caught up in making Bible prophecy regarding the last days merely a hobby-horse we like to ride without seeing how it stokes our passion for the Lord and sharing His word with the lost.

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

This is it – the Second Coming!

It’s fitting that John sees a white horse emerge from heaven.

This was the mount the victorious general would ride on in the victory parade thrown in his honor when He returned triumphant from battle.

Jesus is actually GOING to war here – but there’s never any doubt about the outcome.

The deciding blow was dealt at the cross and this is merely the mop-up operation.

Then John sees the One who’s riding the white horse.

He feels no need to name Him – the Rider’s identity is obvious!

He's the Faithful One – the One who IS True.
And the war He wages is both just and righteous.
That's a phrase that bears some serious reflection and pondering –
. . . in righteousness He judges and makes war.

That means there *IS* such a thing as *just war* – and there is a time for righteousness to manifest itself in force.

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns.

This is the reason why Jesus can make righteous and just war, because nothing escapes His sight and as the Sovereign One, His is the right to execute justice!

Romans 2:16 speaks of the day when Jesus will judge the *secrets* of men.

God looks beyond just our actions to the motives behind them. He knows what's in our hearts, and that is the basis of His judgment.

In Hebrews 4:13 we read that – there is no creature hidden from [God's] sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

When a king wanted to extend his home territory into an empire, as he conquered the surrounding tribes and cities, he would capture the crown of the vanquished kings and wear them.

Once he had enough of them, he might even take them all, remove the stones, melt the metal down and fashion one new larger crown that was a collection of them all.

John sees Jesus as the Supreme monarch who's conquered every foe and now possesses ALL authority.

All those kingdoms the devil offered him a shortcut to in the temptation in the wilderness, have now been secured by obedience to the Father and His mission of redemption.

He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

Precisely what John *means* by this is not certain.

Most commentators believe that the name John mentions here isn't given at this point because he's only getting a *vision* – the name won't be seen & known until the actual Second Coming.

In the ancient world, the use of a name indicated intimacy and

participation.

A man didn't address just any woman by her first name because that was reserved for her immediate family; he would just call her, "Woman."

A king had special names and titles that only certain people on certain levels of familiarity with him could use when speaking *to* him or even *about* him.

In the Second Coming, Jesus will reveal a name that will portray His Sovereignty and our identification with Him that will be mind-blowing.

We can't know it now because it would just be too much good stuff.

Oh friends, there will be surprises at the Second Coming that will stagger us!

13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

In ch. 14, we read of Jesus trampling the wine-press of the wrath of God and His vesture, His garment being splattered by the blood of His enemies. (cf. Isa 63)

That's probably what we see here.

Some note that Jesus's robe is dipped in blood, *prior* to His Second Coming, prior to His trampling the wine-press of God's wrath, so the blood can't be that of His enemies.

They say it's the blood of Christ Himself, Who's attained His victory and right to rule through His work on the Cross.

I prefer the first interpretation because it squares with what John's already spoken of in ch. 14 and fulfills the words of Isa 63 about the coming of the Messiah.

14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

Vs. 7 & 8 have already made it clear that the linen clothing is for the saints.

So when the Lord comes again – He comes with the saints, who now comprise a warrior bride.

Saddle up your horses!

Notice here that there is no mention whatsoever at this point of the

saints being taken up from earth.

Their direction is towards, not away from the earth.

Jesus is coming from where? V. 11 – Heaven.

And what are the saints doing in v. 14? Following Him!

So where must they be coming FROM? Heaven!

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Did John see an actual sword coming out of Jesus' mouth? Possibly – but if so, he understood it to be *symbolic* of the Word of the Lord.

Jesus will not need to wage actual physical war – His spoken

Word of command is enough to affect what He wills – just as

He spoke and the entire creation leapt into existence!

Note that though the armies of heaven follow Christ – He executes judgment on His own!

16 And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Besides the mystery name that will only be revealed at the Second Coming, Jesus bears the name – “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

In v. 12 we saw that Jesus wore many crowns.

Not only did a conquering king claim the *crown* of the vanquished foe, he also gained his *titles*.

Jesus is the King over all kings, and the Lord over all lords.

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, ¹⁸that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great.”

As we saw in an earlier study, when Jesus comes again, it's at the

height of the Battle of Armageddon which He brings a swift and decisive end to.

The carnage will be so vast that it will provide an immense feast for the scavengers who are given a divine invitation to now come and “pork out.”

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

There's no real battle when Jesus comes.

The armies of the West, South and East have come together in the Holy Land and are going at it.

Then Jesus comes and they turn to fight off this new threat from the skies.

But the battle is over before it really begins.

With just a word, the antichrist and false prophet are taken, judged and thrown into the Lake of Fire, which is what we know as *hell*.

The rest of the combatants are slain immediately – their spirits waiting to be judged at the *Great White throne judgment* a thousand years later, which we'll cover next week.

CONCLUSION

I thought it might be good to summarize some of the stuff we've been looking at over the last few weeks.

Only A Remnant

In Rev. 12 we saw that at the mid-point of the Trib, when the antichrist enters the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and sets himself up as God, demanding the world worship him, it's at that point that the Jews reject him, and he responds by going

after them to wipe them out.

2/3's of national Israel is caught and slaughtered, but 1/3 manage to flee to the wilderness hideout of Petra, aka Bozrah.

There they are divinely protected and provided for by God for the last half of the Tribulation.

While there for that last 3½ years, they are collectively led to faith in their real Messiah.

The Armies Gather

In the meantime, as the antichrist works to consolidate his rule and extends his influence and control over more and more territory, eventually the rulers of the East and the South decide they've had enough of him and move to stop his growing influence by sending their armies to meet his.

The Range of Fighting

They meet in the Plain of Esdraelon, or as it is referred to in Rev. 16 – the Armageddon.

The battle line stretches from the ruins of Meggido in the North all the way south to near Bozrah – were it seems the antichrist once again attempts to root out the Jewish remnant from their hiding place at Petra.

The Call of the Remnant

But by the time this happens, the entire remnant has come to a genuine faith in Christ and so they cry out for the Lord's salvation.

It is this cry, this invitation that brings the Lord back!

Seen from this perspective, one of the main purposes of the Tribulation has been to refine Israel and bring them to the place where they come to faith and cry out for their Messiah.

Matthew 23:37-39

Psalm 118:21-26

Isaiah 63:1-6

The Victory Ascent

Jesus halts the Battle of Armageddon, defeats the armies amassed against the Jewish remnant at Bozrah and then sweeps up to Jerusalem to cleanse the city and temple of the evidences of the antichrist's occupation.

The assault on the city begins from the Mt. of Olives.

[\[1\]](#) Johnson, Alan *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, vol 12 pg. 571