

Revelation Chapter 19

Jesus' Victorious Return

“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns’” (verse 6) – praises on earth are but a dim shadow of the heavenly praises described in these verses. As the Book of Revelation approaches the consummation of God’s plan for all history, so we also come to a summit of praise...

Rejoicing in Heaven and the marriage supper of the Lamb (v 1 to 10)

In Revelation 7 verses 9 to 14 we saw a great multitude saved out of the Great Tribulation, ready for the end of the world system and the Antichrist’s reign on earth. Here, this great multitude, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures all join in celebrating the fall of the Antichrist and the world system that supported him. A part of this great multitude – those martyred saints who fell at the hand of Antichrist during the Tribulation – cried out for God’s righteous judgment (Revelation 6 v 9, 10); here, finally, their prayer is answered.

- Who praises God in verses 1 to 8, and what calls forth their praise?
- What do these ‘prayer passages’ tell us about God’s character and deeds?
- Who is the ‘Bride’, and what is the significance of the ‘marriage of the Lamb’ analogy (v 7)?

The marriage of the Lamb, who is the Messiah, is a picture used frequently throughout the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, Israel is presented as God's wife, who is often unfaithful (Hosea 2 v 19, 20; Isaiah 54 v 5). In the New Testament, the Church is presented as the fiancée of Jesus, waiting for their wedding (2 Corinthians 11 v 2; Ephesians 5 v 25 to 32). In Biblical times a marriage involved two major events, the betrothal and the wedding. These were normally separated by a period of time during which the two individuals were considered husband and wife and as such were under obligations of faithfulness. The wedding began with a procession to the bride’s house, followed by a return to the groom’s house for the marriage feast. By analogy, the Church now waits for the time when the heavenly groom will come for his bride and return to Heaven for the marriage feast which lasts for eternity...

But how do we make ourselves ready for this wedding? There is much for us to do, but it is ultimately a work God does in us (Ephesians 5 v 25 to 27). This point is emphasized when John states that “it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” (v 8) – ‘bright’ (*λαμπρός, lampros*) refers to the radiant whiteness of glory; ‘pure’ (*καθαρός, katharos*) reflects purity, loyalty and faithfulness.

“For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints” (verse 8) – Christ-followers are created for divinely prepared good works (Ephesians 2 v 10).

“Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (verse 9) – Jesus eagerly anticipates this marriage supper: he spoke longingly of the day when he would drink of the fruit of the vine again, with his disciples in the Kingdom (Matthew 26 v 27 to 29).

[MORE OVER...]

The rider on a white horse (v 11 to 21)

- In the description of Jesus given in v 11 to 16, what is the significance of each phrase, such as ‘eyes like a flame of fire’; ‘from his mouth comes a sharp sword’; ‘ruling with a rod of iron’ (Psalm 2 v 9)?

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold...” (verse 11) – there is a sense in which all that has gone before in the Book of Revelation has been an introduction to this ‘ultimate revelation’ of Jesus Christ. Now he returns to earth in power and glory.

“He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood” (verse 13) – this could refer to his blood, reminding us of the Cross, but it may also refer to the passage in Isaiah 63 v 1 to 6, which suggests that Jesus’ first ‘mission’ is to rescue the Jewish remnant taking refuge at Bozrah (Petra) in Edom, bringing God’s vengeance upon the enemies of Israel.

According to Zechariah 14 v 3, 4 Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. The plea of Isaiah 64 v 1, 2 is now fulfilled: “Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence”. This prayer for deliverance will be on the lips of the Jewish people surviving through the Tribulation; they will cry out to Jesus their Messiah for deliverance and will embrace him as their Saviour.

As Jesus said in Matthew 23 v 39, “You will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’”. Hard pressed by the terrible persecution of the Antichrist, Israel will finally turn to Jesus, and he will deliver them at this late hour.

“Gather for the great supper of God” (verse 17) – four suppers are described in Scripture:

- (i) the supper of salvation, described in Jesus’ parable (Luke 14 v 16 to 24);
- (ii) the Lord’s supper, in remembrance of Jesus’ sacrifice;
- (iii) the marriage supper of the Lamb (verse 9);
- (iv) the great supper of God (verse 17).

If you reject the first supper, the second supper will mean nothing to you. Then you will not be present at the third supper, but you may be present at the fourth supper...