

REVELATION 19

I. BKGRD.

Revelation 19 gives us three (3) different scenes; three different snapshots, distinct, yet related:

1. A praise & worship service in Heaven;
2. A wedding; and
3. A tremendous battle ("*the mother of all battles*");
 - contrast between carnage & celebration
 - carrion gluttony vs. Wedding Supper, 19:9.

II. TEXT

Let's begin by stating Jesus promised to return: John 14:1-3 "*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*"

In Acts 1:8-10 Jesus told His disciples, "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Revelation 6-18 dealt primarily with the events of the Great Tribulation. Beginning in chapter 19 there is a noticeable change. The Great Tribulation is now coming to its end and the spotlight focuses on heaven and the 2nd coming of Christ to the Earth to establish His Millennial Reign for 1,000 years! For the saints and angels it is a time of rejoicing and victory.

v. 1 "After this" (*meta tauta*), literally, "after these things;" after the destruction of the religious and commercial Babylon described in chs. 17-18, the kingdom of the Antichrist. John "**heard what sounded like the roar**" of many people "**in heaven**" praising God, obviously because of the judgment on religious and commercial Babylon (Rev. 17-18). Who are the "**great multitude**"? Tribulation saints now in Heaven and a couple hundred million angels! The 24 elders join in soon (v. 4).

"Shouting" (KJV, "saying") is the Greek, *lego*, "saying," but in the context it must be a loud, joyous exclamation of praise – "**HALLELUJAH!!!**" (Hebrew); in Greek "*Alleluia!*"

"Hallelujah" occurs in the NT only 4 x's, all of them in Revelation 19 (vv. 1, 3-4, 6). It is derived from two Hebrew words that mean, "*praise YHWH!*" but translated most often as "Praise the LORD!" This is the biblical "Hallelujah Chorus!"

Praise is the heartfelt response of those who love God and appreciate all that He has done for His servants! The more intimate you become with God, the more natural is our praise, worship and gratitude! Praise is at the heart of TRUE WORSHIP! Let your praise of God flow out of realization of who He is and how much He loves you! NOTHING – no trial, circumstance, sickness, disease, not even death – can rob you of your eternal destiny in Christ!

Rom. 8:35, 37-38 "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" THAT should create in us a heart of praise, worship and gratitude!

vv. 2-3 In expressing their praise of God, God's glory and power resulting from and caused by His salvation are mentioned along with the fact that **"His judgments"** are **"true and just."** The destruction of **"the great prostitute"** (cf. 17:1, 4) is a proper act of vengeance for her martyring the **"servants"** of God (17:6). The judgment that is brought on her, however, is only the beginning of the eternal punishment of the wicked, indicated in the statement that **"the smoke from her goes up forever and ever."**

vv. 4-5 The 24 elders and the 4 living creatures (first mentioned in 4:4-8) also sing their own 'Hallelujah Chorus.' This is their last appearance as the 24 elders in Rev., though they appear as Bride later in this chapter! Again, the 24 elders, representing the Church Age saints and OT believers, are distinguished from the Tribulation saints, described in verse 1 as "a great multitude." Reminder also that in 4:4 the 24 elders are **"dressed in white,"** just as the faithful overcomers in the church in Sardis were promised by Jesus they *would* **"walk with Him dressed in white"** (3:4-5), and the repentant in the church at Laodicea (3:18). **"Dressed in white"** described also in Rev. 4:4 (where the 24 elders are so clothed); 6:11; 7:9,13,14; 19:8,14 – OT saints, the Church from the NT and Tribulation saints/ martyrs.

The "4 living creatures" refers to angels who praise God (*seraphim*; cf. Ezek. 1,10). Still another voice of praise also praised God and exhorted **"all you His servants"** (19:5) to join in this praise.

vv. 6-8 The 4th and final hallelujah of this chapter, according to John, sounded like a **"multitude"** of people, **"rushing waters,"** and loud **"thunder."** Here the rejoicing is prophetic for what is about to happen rather than for the judgment just executed.

The Second Coming of Christ is anticipated in the words, **"for our Lord God Almighty reigns"** (v. 6). John uses the word "Almighty" (*παντοκράτωρ*). Along with the exhortation to **"rejoice,"** announcement is made that **"the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready."** Interesting, Israel is in the OT portrayed as a harlot, an unfaithful wife and a divorced woman – and in Lev. the High Priest (here, Jesus) was forbidden to marry a divorced woman; the Bride here is the Church, spotless and dressed in white marrying Jesus our High priest (Heb. 3; 4; 5).

In Scripture, marriage is often used to describe the relationship of saints to God. In the OT Israel is pictured, as in Isa. 54 and Hosea 2, as the unfaithful wife of YHWH who is destined to be restored in the future kingdom. In the NT, marriage is also used to describe the relationship between Christ and His spotless Bride, the Church (Mt 22:2-14; 2 Cor.11:2; Eph. 5:25-32).

The **"fine linen"** (v. 8) with which the bride will be adorned is explained as representing **"the righteous acts of the saints."** The plural expression "the righteous acts" seems to refer to the righteous deeds done by the saints through the grace and power of God.

Isaiah 61:10 *"I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."*

v. 9 The angel who commanded John to write (14:13) commanded him again to record the message, **"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"** Comparing the wedding described here to weddings in the first century, a wedding normally included these stages:

- (1) the legal consummation of the marriage by the parents of the bride and of the groom, with the payment of the dowry (the bride-price);
- (2) the bridegroom coming to claim his bride (as illustrated in Matt. 25:1-13 Parable of the 10 Virgins);
- (3) the wedding supper (as illustrated in John 2:1-11) which was a several-day feast following the previous phase of the wedding.

In Revelation 19:9 **"the wedding supper"** is the 3rd phase. And the announcement coincides with the Second Coming of Christ. It would seem, therefore, that the wedding supper has not yet been observed.

- In fulfilling the symbol, Christ is completing phase 1 in the Church Age as individuals are saved.
- Phase 2 will be accomplished at the Rapture of the church, when Christ takes His bride to heaven, the Father's house (John 14:1-3). Accordingly it would seem that the beginning of the Millennium itself will fulfill the symbolism of the wedding supper. It is also significant that the use of the word "bride" in 19:7 implies that phase 2 of the wedding will have been completed and that all that remains is the feast itself.

All this suggests that the wedding feast is an earthly feast, which also corresponds to the illustrations of weddings in the Bible (Matt. 22:1-14; 25:1-13), and thus will take place on earth at the beginning of the Millennium. The importance of the announcement and invitation to the wedding supper, repeated in Revelation 22:17, is seen in the angel's remarks, "**These are the true words of God.**"

v. 10 John once again fell down to worship the angel, as he had done before (1:17). Then, however, he was worshiping Christ, which was proper. But here the angel rebuked him, urging him to worship only God and not him since he was "**a fellow servant**" with John. The angel added, "**For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy**," that is, the very nature, essence and purpose of prophecy is to testify of Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and to bring glory to Him. Worship of angels is FORBIDDEN! Only God is worthy of worship. Lucifer desired it (Isa. 14; Ezek. 28).

In the present Age one of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ and to inform believers of "*what is yet to come*" (John 16:13). The tremendous revelation in the first 10 verses of Revelation 19 is a fitting introduction to what is about to be revealed, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the subject of the entire book (1:1).

vv. 11-21 Just as the first coming of Christ was literal and was fulfilled in history, so the Second Coming of Christ, which is yet future, will be fulfilled in the same literal manner.

It should be noted that none of the many details given in Revelation 19:11-21 corresponds to the Rapture of the church. In Revelation Christ returns, but in none of the Rapture passages is He ever pictured as touching the earth, for the saints meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). Most significant is the fact that in Revelation 19-20 there is complete silence concerning any translation of living saints – no hint of a post-Tribulational rapture of the Church.

In fact the implication of the passage is that saints who are on earth when Christ returns will remain on earth to enter the Millennial Kingdom in their natural bodies. If the Rapture were included in the Second Coming of Christ to the earth, one would expect to find reference to such a major event in Rev. 19. But no such reference is found. For these and many other reasons chapter 19 is a confirmation of the teaching that the Rapture of the church is a separate, earlier event and that there is no translation of the living at the time of His 2nd coming to the earth.

NOW . . . see Zechariah 14!!! READ IT ALL!

v. 11 The vision is of the departure from heaven of Christ, with the saints and angels, preparatory to the catastrophe in which Gentile world power, headed up in the beast, is judged by the Rock "*cut out, but not by human hands*" (Dan 2:34-35).

"**White horse**" - ridden by Roman conquerors/generals. NOT the same "white horse" of 6:2 which is ridden by the Antichrist! Here Jesus is returning as Warrior-Messiah-King!

"**Faithful and True**" -- Jesus called the faithfulness witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5); again to the church at Laodicea, Jesus is described as the "*Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation*" (Rev. 3:14).

- FAITHFUL He can be trusted absolutely
- TRUE *alethinos*, has 2 meanings; (1) true, e.g. without falsity (2) genuine, real.

"**With justice he judges and makes war**" -- a righteous war? Not often practiced by Man; notice that God and Christ are perfectly just!

v. 12 "His eyes are like blazing fire" (see the description of the glorified Christ in 1:14)

"Many crowns" - *diadem*, a ruler's crown; not *stephanos*, the plaited victor's wreath.

- John 12:31 - Jesus called Satan *"the prince of this world"*.
- Eph. 2:2 - Paul called him *"the ruler of the kingdom of the air."*
- In Luke's account of the temptation of Jesus, it says *"the devil led Him up to a high place and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms in the world. And he said to Him, 'I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. So if you worship me, all this will be yours!' But Jesus answered, 'It is written, Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only!'"*

Now...Jesus comes to reclaim HIS own!!! The fullest implications of His Name are unknowable by sinful Man.

v. 13 "Robe dipped in blood" -- vesture dipped in blood a ref. to Isa. 63:1-3 *"Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? 'It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.' Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 'I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come."* It is not His own blood, but the blood of His enemies shed in conflict as they are destroyed. Also bore out in v.15.

"His name is the Word of God" -- cf. Jn. 1:1ff, 14.

v. 14 Armies of heaven riding white horses and dressed in fine linen. Notice the army's attire: **"fine linen, white and clean."** (cf. vv. 7-8 **"Saints"**; 17:14 *"... and with Him will be His called, chosen and faithful followers"*).

- Rev. 3:4-5 Sardis (church) - *"... will walk with Me dressed in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white."*
- We will be a part of that army: *"Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints"* we were told in 19:8.
- Rev 3:18 The Church at Laodicea was encouraged to *"buy white clothes to wear from Christ, so they could cover their shameful nakedness."*
- Rev. 4:4 The 24 Elders dressed in white, crowns of gold on heads.
- Rev. 6:11 The Tribulation Saints were given a white robe and told *"wait"*.
- Rev. 7:9,13 *"a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language...wearing white robes."* In v. 13 the angel identifies them; those who have come out of the Great Tribulation; *"they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*

v. 15 "Sword" -- *rhomphaia*, a large, 2 -handed, English broad-sword type of weapon -- of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6 *machaira*). Cf. Heb 4:12 *"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword [Greek, machaira], it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

In Genesis we find God creating the universe and the earth by speaking it into existence! *"God said, 'Let there be light!' and there was light..."* If we only realized the POWER in the Word of God!!! What say we appropriate it today! Learn it! Use it! The spiritual equivalent of an H-bomb!

"He will rule them with an iron scepter" quotes Ps. 2:9, which starts out, *"Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against His Anointed One..."*

v. 17 "...standing in the sun..." an intensely hot, self-luminous body of gases (mainly hydrogen and helium) at the center of our solar system. The sun is a medium-size main-sequence star. Its mean distance from the earth is defined as one ASTRONOMICAL UNIT (just under 93-million miles). The sun is ca. 865,400 mi. in diameter; its volume is about 1.3 mill. times that of the earth. At its center, the sun has a pressure of over 1 billion atmospheres (1 bill. x 14.7 psi = 14.7 bill. psi), and a temperature of about 10-20 mill. °C. The corona of the sun is cools down considerably, but is still over 1,000,000°C!

Angels are interesting creatures possessing interesting abilities!

"Great supper of God" contrasted with the "Wedding Supper of the Lamb" (v.9). The carnage and clean-up of the battlefield is described in Ezekiel 39.

Sounds foolish to fight against God, doesn't it? - yet many do today...even within the Church! We fight against Him when we know what he wants us to do and refuse to do it: giving vs. a new home theatre; church vs. sleeping in; Jesus vs. "good works"; love vs. hate, racism, partiality, and cliques.

Don't fight God! THE WORST SIN OF ALL IS TO TEACH OTHERS TO SIN! By example!

v. 19 Psalm 2 "Why do the nations conspire and plot in vain?"

This battle is Armageddon, spoken of in Rev. 16:16 and involves several hundred million troops! Rev. 9:13-16 "The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million. I heard their number."

These troops prepare for battle; in Rev. 16:12ff, as the 6th bowl judgment is poured out, we see them march for Israel: "The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty."

v. 20 The wicked who have died throughout the history of the world up to this point are in *hades* (Luke 16:23). The "**fiery lake**," a different place, was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), and will not be occupied by human beings until later (Rev. 20:10,14-15; 21:8).

III. SUMMARY / APPLICATION

A. Notice the importance of the WORD, v. 13. I'm impressed with the number of references to the Word of God and how closely Jesus associates Himself with it! It needs to be important to us! Use it! Eph. 6 lists the Word of God as the only offensive weapon we have in spiritual warfare along with prayer. Correlate w/ v. 10 "Prophecy" is from the Holy Spirit, whose job it is to draw attention to Jesus, not Himself, nor US! Don't worship anything but God: not the gifts, nor the things of this world! God less interested in telling you about what's happening tomorrow than pointing us to His Son and the Scriptural exercise of gifts that build up the Body, not us.

B. Don't fight against God, vv. 17-18. The worst of all sins is to teach others to sin!

C. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN!!! Are you ready? (John 14; Acts 1:8-10)

D. The names of Christ show us different facets of His identity:

1. vv. 7,9 "Lamb" - sacrifice, gentleness;
2. v. 11 Militant conqueror on a white charger;
3. v. 11 "Faithful and True;"
4. v. 12 "Name written on Him that no one knows except himself" -- unknowable, transcendent, too much (e.g Jacob wrestling with the Angel of the LORD, Gen. Moses in the cleft).
5. v. 13 His name is the WORD OF GOD - cf. Isa. 1:1ff
6. v. 15 "He will rule ("shepherd") them with a rod of iron" - gentle yet firm; a caring disciplinarian.
7. v. 16 "KING of kings and LORD of lords"

E. Hell is REAL! (v.20) Alienation from God; *Gehenna*, weeping and gnashing of teeth, outer darkness, wailing, a place of torment (Luke 16).