

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 8TH, 2024 // REVELATION

THE CELEBRATION (REVELATION 19:1-5)

BABYLON THE GREAT HAS FALLEN

John's vision of two cities (Babylon the Great and the New Jerusalem) began in Ch. 17 and has focused on the evil city/culture personified by a "notorious prostitute." This evil city was destroyed in Ch. 18, and Ch. 19 shows heaven ("pure bride") celebrating God's victory over evil.

- God specializes in making things new, and for the "new" to come the "old" must pass away.

UNIVERSAL WORD OF PRAISE

John opens this vision by describing what he was hearing. John heard a "vast multitude in heaven" celebrating and shouting "Hallelujah!" Hallelujah is a Hebrew word, used by Christians of all nations that means "praise the Lord."

- The use of a universal word of praise and the linking of OT and NT reinforce that **all people are welcomed into God's family.**

THE REASON WE PRAISE THE LORD

Anytime "Hallelujah" is used it is typically followed by the "why" behind the praise.

- The redeemed of God praise Him because **salvation belongs to Him** exclusively (v. 1), **His judgments are true and just** (v. 2), **He has judged the "notorious prostitute" who corrupted the Earth** (v. 2), and **He has avenged the blood of His servants** (v. 2).

"HER SMOKE ASCENDS FOREVER AND EVER!"

The multitude shouts out a second time, celebrating not only the judgment but its finality (v. 3). The 24 elders and 4 living creatures (Ch. 4) fall down and join the celebration, affirming the praise of God's people.

- The three-part funeral song for Babylon in Ch. 18 is now reversed as John records a celebration of God's victory.

THE FEAST (REVELATION 19:6-10)

"THEN I HEARD..."

John's vision is shifting from the "notorious prostitute," who is defeated and never mentioned again, to the Bride.

- The great multitude here is possibly the same multitude John saw in Revelation 11:16-18. The 7th trumpet is the end and Chapters 12-18 are detailing the events leading to Christ's return.

THE TIME HAS COME

John describes the sound of this multitude as being like "the sound of cascading waters" and "rumbling of loud thunder."

- John tells us in v. 7 that the reason for this thunderous praise and worship is that "the marriage of the Lamb has come." At least 29 times in Revelation we see Jesus referred to as the Lamb, but who is the Bride?

WHY A MARRIAGE?

In the OT, Israel was referred to as the bride of the Lord and in the NT the church is referred to as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-32).

- Vs. 7-9 are best understood in the context of a traditional Jewish marriage. There were two phases. The first phase began with betrothal, where the marriage covenant began but was not yet consummated.

THE BRIDEGROOM IS TOLD TO GO GET HIS BRIDE

The second phase was the wedding ceremony. Leading up to this event the bridegroom would prepare a place for His bride (John 14:3) and await permission from the father of the bridegroom to bring her to the ceremony.

- The bridegroom went with a procession to bring the bride back to the place prepared for her for an elaborate feast that lasted for days.

BEING PREPARED

This text announces that the Church and Christ have been united for all eternity. The "bride has prepared herself" and is clothed in "fine linen, bright and pure." V. 8 tells us this fine linen "represents the righteous acts of the saints."

- There is nothing more beautiful to the bridegroom (Jesus) than to see his bride (the Church) perform righteous deeds.

"THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY"

John is so overwhelmed that he falls at the angel's feet and begins to worship him. The angel corrects John's mistake and tells him not to worship him.

- Angels are simply messengers of God ("a fellow servant" v. 10), who like us, "hold firmly to the testimony of Jesus" and are not to be worshipped.

THE RIDER (REVELATION 19:11-16)

"THEN I SAW HEAVEN OPENED"

John has seen Jesus as the one walking among the 7 lampstands (Ch. 1), as the slaughtered Lamb before the throne of God (Ch. 5), previously as the bridegroom, and now as a conquering King on a white horse.

- Though His name is not mentioned here, it is very clear, with the descriptions and titles given, just exactly who the Rider is.

SYMBOL OF WAR NOT PEACE

Jesus was witnessed riding on a donkey as he entered Jerusalem shortly before His death (John 12:12-15).

- In this vision, Jesus is seen riding a white horse like that of a general about to wage war and/or celebrate victory. White is symbolic of **the pure and holy character of the rider.**

TITLES OF THE RIDER

The 1st title is "Faithful and True" showing God is committed to His promises.

- The 2nd title is a mystery only He knows. This is a reminder that He is God and there are aspects of His character that are infinite and unknowable. **It is ok that there are things about God and His ways we will not understand fully until we are with Him in Heaven.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE RIDER

"His eyes were like a fiery flame" showing wisdom, omniscience, and possibly righteous anger.

- "Many crowns were on His head" showing authority and victory over all kingdoms.
- "Robe dipped in blood" is most likely the blood of His enemies and not the blood of the cross or the blood of the martyrs.
- Isaiah 63:2-3 (CSB)

THE THIRD TITLE OF THE RIDER (JOHN 1:1)

John says, "His name is called the Word of God" because He is the revelation of the fullness of God.

- God created the universe with words and the Rider will use His Word ("a sharp sword") to end all evil. Jesus will not use brute force or a literal sword but will only need a single word.

THE FOCUS IS ON THE TITLE NOT THE PLACEMENT

John notices that when the heavens opened, the Rider was followed by the "armies that were in heaven" also on "white horses, wearing pure white linen."

- On the Rider's robe and thigh was the name "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS," showing absolute power and sovereignty.

THE KING OF KINGS (REVELATION 19:17-21)

THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD

Previously, in this chapter, there was a feast, (a wedding supper celebrating our consummation with God), but this feast, the great supper of God, is something different.

- This is a feast not for *people* but of *people*. It is an invitation for all birds of the air to feast on the flesh of the slaughtered enemies of God.

THE "BATTLE" OF ARMAGEDDON

This scene depicts the last, final battle between good and evil mentioned in Chs. 16-17.

- The battle is over before it even begins—the Antichrist, false prophet, and kings of Earth gather to wage war, but the beast and false prophet are thrown into "the lake of fire" while everyone else is slain by "the sword" and their flesh devoured by birds.

WHO IS JESUS TO YOU?

- We've seen in this chapter alone, several depictions of who Jesus is: a **bridegroom** (vs. 6-10), a **conquering King** (vs. 11-16), and a **righteous judge** (vs. 17-21).
- If we do not make Him Lord of our lives and receive Him as our bridegroom and our king, then **we will face him as a righteous judge only.**

ARE WE READY?

- This chapter is the fulfillment of the main theme of Revelation—He is returning as King!
- The bridegroom (Jesus) could come for his bride (us) at any time.
- Are we **keeping ourselves pure, undefiled by this world, awaiting our wedding day** with Jesus, **while living a lifestyle of righteous deeds until he returns?**