

## Revelation 19 – The White Rider and The Two Feasts

Introductory Note: Chapters 19 and 20 are the source of several different controversies. People from every theological interpretation, and even within the different camps, disagree about the nature and timing of the events signified here. One's interpretation of chapter 19 will directly affect one's understanding of the millennium in chapter 20. We will discuss the various millennial views there.

### I. The Praise of God's Victory is Heard (1-6)

#### A. The Recapitulation of The Seventh Trumpet Judgment

1. This was presented in chapter 11
  - a. There we saw the praise given to God for beginning to reign
  - b. There we saw the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord
  - c. There we saw the temple in heaven opened
2. The Same language used in Chapter 19
  - a. The voices in heaven
    - i. 11:15 – loud voices in heaven
    - ii. 19:1 – loud voice of great multitude in heaven
  - b. The Praise for God's Reign
    - i. 11:15, 17 – He will reign forever and ever...you have taken your great power and begun to reign
    - ii. 19:1, 6 – Hallelujah! Salvation and power and glory belong to our God...For the Lord God Almighty Reigns
  - c. The worship of the 24 elders
    - i. 11:16 – The 24 elders fall down and worship
    - ii. 19:4 – The 24 elders fall down and worship
  - d. The Avenging of the Martyrs / Servants
    - i. 11:18 - ...and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great,
    - ii. 19:2, 5 - and has avenged on her the blood of his servants...all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.
  - e. The image of Thunder
    - i. 11:19 - There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder
    - ii. 19:6 - like the sound of mighty peals of thunder
3. We have also already seen the parallels between the bowl judgments and the trumpets (See Outline For Ch. 16)

NOTE: The Hallelujahs presented in the first part of ch. 19 reflect the temple practice of the people during the bringing of the sacrifice on the day of atonement.

See Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as They Were At The Time of Jesus Christ*, p. 223-224

*"While this was going on [the priest pouring the blood on the altar] a most solemn 'hymn' of praise was raised, the Levites leading in song, and the offerers either repeating after them or merely responding. Every first line of a Psalm was repeated by the people, while to each of the others they responded by a 'Hallelujah' or 'Praise ye the Lord.' This service of song consisted of the so-called 'Hallel,' which comprised Psalms 113 to 118. Thus –*

*The Levites Began: 'Hallulejah' (Praise ye the Lord)*

*The people repeated: 'Hallelujah'*

*The Levites: 'Praise (Hallelu), O ye servants of Jehovah*

*The people: 'Hallelujah;*

*The Levites: Praise (Hallelu) the name of Jehovah*

*The people: 'Hallelujah'*

*Similarly, when Psalm 113 had been finished – Psalm 114:*

*The Levites: 'When Israel went out of Egypt'*

*The people: 'When Israel went out of Egypt'*

*The Levites: 'The house of Jacob from a people of strange language'*

*The people: Hallelujah*

*And in the same manner, repeating each first line and responding at the rest*

*[Hallelujah] till they came to Psalm 118, when, besides the first, these three lines were also repeated by the people (verses 25-26)*

*'Save now, I beseech thee Jehovah'*

*O Jehovah, I beseech thee, send now prosperity' and*

*'blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah'*

*May it not be that to this solemn and impressive 'hymn' corresponds the alleluja song of the redeemed church in heaven, as described in Rev. 19:1, 3, 4, 6?"*

#### B. The First Hallelujah (1-2)

##### 1. The Great Multitude Cries Hallelujah (1a)

- a. Remember in chapter 18, God's people were told to rejoice over the harlot's destruction

##### 2. The Great Multitude Praises God's Judgments (1b-2)

- a. They ascribe power and glory to God (1b)
  - i. Reference to 1 Chron. 29:11 when David gathered the supplies to build the Temple?
- b. They praise His judgment of the harlot (2a)
- c. They praise Him for avenging His servants (2b)
  - i. From the early chapters of Revelation we have seen the martyrs calling for justice from under the altar

#### C. The Second Hallelujah (3)

##### 1. The Great Multitude Cries Hallelujah Again

##### 2. The Great Multitude Rejoices over the Harlot's destruction

#### D. The Third Hallelujah (4)

1. The Heavenly Court Responds in Worship (4a)
2. The Heavenly Court Say – Amen, Hallelujah (4b)
- E. The Fourth Hallelujah (5-6)
  1. The Command is Given For All To Praise God (5)
    - a. The Command comes from the Throne
    - b. The Command is for His servants, small and great
  2. The Command is Obeyed (6)
    - a. The Multitude Shouts Again
      - i. They sound like the roar of many waters
      - ii. They sound like mighty peals of thunder
    - b. The Multitude Praises God's Reign
- II. The Feast of the Lamb Is Prepared (7-10)
  - A. The Marriage Supper of The Lamb (7-9)
    1. Rejoice in Anticipation of the Marriage (7a)
      - a. The beginning phrase here is the same as in psalm 118:24
      - b. *Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." (Matthew 22:1-7*
    2. The Bride is Prepared For Her Groom (7b-8)
      - a. The allusion is to Isa. 61:10 – where God provides the clothes for the wedding
        - i. Isa. 62:4-6 - It will no longer be said to you, "aForsaken, Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My delight is in her," And your land, "bMarried"; For the Lord delights in you, And to Him your land will be married. For as a young man marries a virgin, So your sons will marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you.
      - b. She is clothed with Linen – as the corrupt harlot was in 18:16 – she is the faithful wife
  3. The Blessing of the Marriage is Announced (9)
    - a. Those invited to the supper are blessed
      - i. The metaphor changes slightly

- ii. The bride is seen as the church as a whole but here the individual believers are those who are invited to the wedding. They are the blessed ones
  - b. The words of God are true
- B. The Interpretation of Prophecy (10)
  - 1. John Falls Down To worship the Angel
  - 2. John is Corrected in His Worship
    - a. Notice that Jesus never corrected those who worshiped Him
    - b. Notice that heavenly divine beings won't allow themselves to be worshiped
  - 3. John is Told the Spirit of Prophecy
    - a. Objective genitive – The testimony believers give about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy
    - b. Subjective genitive – The testimony Jesus himself bears to the world is the spirit of prophecy

NOTE: Here begins the controversy. Is the following section the second coming of Christ at the end of history? Is it a judgment coming demonstrating Christ's work in removing the Old Covenant system from existence? Is it the removal of biblical Judaism as the gospel goes forth to the world in power?

### III. The Coming of The White Rider (11-16)

- A. The White Rider Descends From Heaven (11-14)
  - 1. The Description of the Rider (11-13)
    - a. He is called faithful and true (See Rev. 3:14)
    - b. He judges and makes war
    - c. His eyes are like a flame of fire
    - d. He wears many diadems
    - e. He alone knows the name written upon him
    - f. His robe is dipped in blood
    - g. His name is the Word of God
  - 2. The Armies of Heaven Follow Him (14)
    - a. Are these angelic beings?
    - b. Are they the souls of the believers in heaven
    - c. Are believers ever said to make war and slay enemies? (even if you see this as the final battle?)
- B. The White Rider's Authority (15-16)
  - 1. He strikes the nations by His Word (15a)
    - a. The sword from his mouth references the servant of God in Isa. 49:2 - He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.
      - i. Also notice in 49:6 the purpose of the servant - He says, "It is too small a thing that You should

be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

- ii. Isa. 11:4 - But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

iii. See also Hebrews 4:12-13

2. He Bears God's Rule and Judgment (15b)

- a. He will rule with a rod of iron – From Psalm 2:9
- b. He will tread the winepress of God's wrath
  - i. See Isa. 63:2-6 - Why is Your apparel red,
  - ii. And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My raiment." "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come. "I looked, and there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me. "I trod down the peoples in My anger And made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

3. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords (16)

IV. The Feast of Those Under Judgment (17-21)

A. The Birds Are Called To Feast on The Judged (17-18)

- 1. An angel calls to the birds to gather for the supper of God (17)
  - a. This is the other side of the coin – the opposite of the marriage supper of the lamb
- 2. The birds are called to eat the flesh of the judged (18)
  - a. They will feast on kings, captains, mighty men
  - b. They will feast on horses and their riders
  - c. They will feast on all men – slave and free, small and great
- 3. The image is taken from Ezekiel 39 – The battle of Gog and Magog
  - a. 39:4 - ...I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured.
  - b. 39:17-20 - As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God: Speak to the birds of every sort and to all beasts of

the field: 'Assemble and come, gather from all around to the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan. And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you. And you shall be filled at my table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all kinds of warriors,' declares the Lord God.

- c. Why refer to Ezekiel's Gog and Magog? Greg Beale says, "The portrayal in Ezekiel 39 has been included because its main point is that God will "make known" his "holy name" both to Israel and to Israel's oppressors during captivity by defeating Gog and Magog. The goal of revealing the divine name introduces (Ezek. 39:7) and concludes (39:21–25) the description of the slaughter (39:8–20). God's name is revealed so that Israel and the persecuting nations will "know that I am the LORD" (39:7, 22, 28), so that God's glory will be recognized by all (39:21). In particular, God will make his name known to Israel by saving and being present with Israel (39:29), and he will reveal his name to the nations by judging Gog and Magog. The same dual theme with respect to the revelation of Christ's name has been the overriding concern in Rev. 19:11–16." – Beale, Revelation Commentary, (Rev. 19:17-18)
- d. Remember to be eaten by birds of prey is a covenant judgment on Israel if they break covenant – Deut. 28:26 - And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away.
- e. Also a well known image of defeat and death in battle – see 1 Sam. 17:44-46; 1 Kings 14:11; 16:4; 21:24; 2 Kings 9:10; Jer. 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20

B. The Judgment of God's Enemies (19-21a)

1. The Beast and the Kings of the Land Gather to Make war

a. They gather with their armies

- i. The same image we saw in Rev. 16:14 as the demonic spirits brought the kings together for war (Remember we saw Zechariah 14:2 alluded to in Rev. 16 – God will bring armies against Jerusalem)

- ii. Also allusion from Psalm 2:2 - The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the Lord and against His <sup>c</sup>Anointed
    - iii. We will also see this image in Rev. 20
  - b. They gather against the rider
- 2. The Beast and the False Prophet are Judged
  - a. The Beast and the false prophet who deceived the people are captured
  - b. They are thrown alive into the Lake of Fire
  - c. Four Possibilities (From Ralph Bass)
    - i. Nero and the high priest in Jerusalem were indeed in bodily form thrown alive into the fire which burns with brimstone
    - ii. They were indeed thrown alive into the lake of fire (19:20), but what is referred to is their soul.
    - iii. This will happen in the future. It has not yet been fulfilled. If we take this position, then we remove historic Jerusalem and Rome of the first century from our current interpretation and look for another interpretation at a different time in history.
    - iv. This passage is metaphor or symbol.
  - d. The lake of fire will be defined for us in Revelation 20 as the “second death” – eternal torment
- 3. The Rest Are Slain By the Word of God (21a)
- C. The Feast of The Judged Commences (21b)

#### Lines of Evidence:

1. The only weapon used against the enemy is the word of Christ. It seems this is a spiritual war waged with the word, a picture of the power and purpose behind the siege of Jerusalem.
2. In Revelation 20:1-3 (which is tied to the chapter 19 vision), God protects the nations from being deceived by binding Satan, which makes little sense if chapter 19 shows the destruction of all the nations in the final battle.
3. The Identity of the Beast and the False Prophet are given specifically to us in chapter 17 (see notes there)

The “coming” of Christ here is both the judgment on Jerusalem, the warrior king coming to avenge his people, and the vindication of the gospel message of the kingdom. This “war” destroyed the remnants of the old covenant and continues today as the word (the sword from his mouth) goes to the nations, subduing the kingdom of darkness.

Revelation 1:7 - *BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth [land] will mourn over Him.*

David Clark, makes a vivid application for us in Revelation 19:

But does the conquest of this rider on the white horse pertain only to the Roman Empire? Must we be ever dealing with things that are dead and buried centuries ago? Is there nothing in all this that touches and vitalizes the church of the present day? or are we never to get beyond the dry dust of the catacombs? . . . Let the church remember that this rider on the white horse is the living Jesus, that he is in the forefront of every battle, that just as he conquered the beast and the false prophet, so he will conquer every enemy. . . . The rider on the white horse is still riding on. Let the church follow, clothed in linen, white and clean. (Cited in Steve Gregg, *Revelation: Four Views*)