

REVELATION 19

Introductory Comments:

- In stark contrast to what we saw in chapter 18, this chapter begins with a grand celebration in heaven. The cause of this celebration is the judgment of the wicked and vindication of the saints graphically described in the previous chapter. After the vision of this celebration, another vision of the destruction of Satan and the wicked is given (vv. 11-21).

Rev. 19:1-5

- “The loud voice of a great multitude in heaven” – This is the collected voice of all believers of all time assembled before the throne and joined to the host of angels. They are praising God for taking vengeance upon their enemies and for ushering in the New Age of His Eternal Kingdom.
- “Salvation and glory and power belong to our God” – The saints and angels sing this hymn of praise to the only God who exists and reigns over the universe. Finally, all people will know the truth that their God is the only true God. All the ridicule and persecution they endured during their lives on earth has finally been justified, for God has proven Himself faithful to His promises, and has shown all people that His judgments are “true and just.” It may seem odd that the saints and angels would celebrate the destruction of the wicked. We can’t fully understand this because we’re still plagued by sin in this life. Thus, we are prone to say, “Wait a minute, why the celebration? Shouldn’t the saints and angels be lamenting the fact that the majority of people have been cast into Hell to suffer eternal torment?” But, when that Day comes, we will surely understand. For the first time, we will know what true Life is – Life without the wickedness of sin and all its consequences. And, we will know that the cause of that wickedness has been eternally removed from us as all the wicked are cast into Hell. Thus, the celebration!
- “The smoke from her (Babylon the Great) goes up forever and ever” – Sin is destroyed forever! No more will it plague God’s people, who will live eternally in the Paradise of His Kingdom.
- “Twenty-four elders and four living creatures” – Cf. chapters 4 and 5; all of heaven joins in the grand celebration! This is what heaven has been waiting and praying for – the End of this Age and the beginning of the New Eternal Age to come. As mentioned many times in this class, heaven is NOT the final destination of the saints, as many people fail to understand. Heaven is the interim place where the spirits of the faithful departed join the host of angels in worship and prayer before the throne of God. The saints and angels pray and long for the Day when Christ will be sent back to earth for the Final Judgment, for then they will be resurrected and enter into Christ’s Eternal Kingdom in both body and soul to live forever in Paradise. Eternity will not be spent in heaven, but in the New Heaven and New Earth and it will not be the seemingly boring existence many people expect (sitting on clouds, playing harps, etc.), but will be an eternity of living Life the way it was meant to be lived. There will be more to do in God’s Eternal Kingdom than we can possibly imagine!

Rev. 19:6-10

- The hymn of praise continues, for “the marriage of the Lamb has come.” Finally, the Bride (Church) will be joined to her Bridegroom (Christ) in a grand ceremony and celebration. This is the fulfillment of the Church Militant’s anticipation throughout history. Already in this life, we who belong to the Christian Church are the Bride of Christ, but on the Last Day we will see that reality in full. Already, we partake of the Feast of the Lamb in Holy Communion, but on the Last Day we will enjoy the Feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom, which has no end.
- “His Bride has made herself ready . . . fine linen, bright and pure” – Throughout Revelation, we have been shown what the saints look like. They are clothed in white garments, which refer to the holiness and righteousness of Christ that covers them like a robe. They receive these white

garments at Baptism and their garments are kept pure through the Blood of the Lamb as they receive Him in His Holy Word and in Holy Communion. Here, the fine linen is said to be “the righteous deeds of the saints,” for it is the righteous deeds of Christ in which they are clothed which makes them pure and holy. Only those who are properly clothed are “invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb,” that is, only those who, through repentance and faith, are clothed in Christ.

- “You must not do that” – St. John is so moved by this awesome vision of the saints in heaven that he falls down to worship before the angel, who is no longer Christ, but one of His created angels. The angel quickly rebukes him, reminding him that worship belongs to God and God alone.
- “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” – This is a clear reference to the fact that all of the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus.

Rev. 19:11-16

- Here the vision shifts once again. St. John is shown, again, a vision of the Judgment of Satan and all the wicked. This time, the vision is more focused on the One who will do the judging, namely Christ.
- “A white horse . . . One sitting on it is called Faithful and True” – Christ is the One who will do the judging on Judgment Day. He is the One who will ride out and defeat the enemy. All of the descriptive language points to Christ and Him alone: “Righteousness,” “many diadems,” “robe dipped in blood,” “Word of God.” Christ is the General over the armies of heaven and will lead the charge against Satan and his armies in the battle of “Armageddon.” He will be victorious, for He is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Remember, none of this is to be taken literally, but is symbolic. Thus, Christ will not literally ride out on a literal white horse with a literal army for a literal battle with Satan and his armies. This is a spiritual battle, which has already been won by Christ. On the Last Day, when Christ returns, the victory He has already won will be seen by all, and the judgment already pronounced upon all of His enemies will be carried out in full.

Rev. 19:17-21

- Here we get another graphic description of God’s judgment upon His enemies, for the birds of the earth are invited to “gather . . . to eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses and riders, of all men, both small and great.” *“The imagery is drawn from the similarly grotesque words of Ezekiel’s summons of the scavengers and birds of prey to feast upon the sacrifice of the hordes of Gog (cf. Ezekiel 39:17-20). In both instances God is the host for He has planned this feast and supplied its provisions – the corpses of the fallen hosts of His enemies, those who have persecuted and oppressed the church. The language leaves no doubt that the bodies of the slain will be drawn from every class and category of men. The only survivors of this conflagration will be those who follow the Champion and are loyal to Christ” (White, Revelation, pp. 614-615).*
- “The beast and kings of the earth with their armies gather to make war against [Christ]” – Christ’s enemies are not convinced that their defeat is eminent. They will wage war, led by Satan, against Christ by attacking His Church throughout the NT era, most intensely during Satan’s “little season” before the End, which is what is in view here (the symbolic battle of Armageddon).
- “The beast and false prophet are captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire” – Again, Revelation leaves no doubt as to the result of this so-called “battle.” Christ is victorious. In fact, notice that there is no description of actual warfare – Christ’s enemies make ready for war, but they are defeated before the war even begins. The beast and false prophet (the manifestation of Satan as the End-time Antichrist) are thrown into the lake of fire “alive,” symbolizing the ongoing torment and suffering they will endure for eternity.
- “The rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth . . .” – *“The remainder of the hosts of the enemy is slain by the judgment sword that proceeds from the mouth of the Warrior Messiah.*

The reference is obviously not to literal physical death but to the condemnation of the impenitent by the stern word of God's holy law. The grisly image is completed as the carrion eaters gorge themselves on the bodies of the fallen" (White, Revelation, p. 620).

- Thus, once again, we are shown in graphic details the judgment of God through His Christ upon all the wicked.