

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS

Revelation 19:1-21

THE ANNOUNCEMENTS OF CHRIST'S RETURN. Revelation 19:1-10.

Chapter 19 announces the most exciting and important event in history since the resurrection of Jesus Christ. All Heaven rejoices as Christ is about to return to earth. There are four "Alleluias" in Chapter 19. (Verses 1, 3, 4, 6) "Alleluia" is an English transliteration of the Greek word, "Hallelujah" and means "Praise Jehovah" or "Praise the Lord." It is only found in these four verses in the New Testament. In the Old Testament it is translated "*Praise ye the Lord*" (See Psa. 104, 105, 106, 111, 112).

This is the turning point in the Book of Revelation and in the future history of the world. The great multitude in heaven, made up of all the saints of God throughout history, are joined by the twenty four elders in exuberant rejoicing because God is now about to bring complete deliverance to the earth.¹ The promises of God are about to be fulfilled. For centuries, those who have believed God have trusted in the coming of this day, and now it has arrived. (Rev. 19:1)

The saints of God also rejoice because sin and rebellion against God is judged! (Rev. 19:2) The false religions of the world focus on God's love and ignore the fact that He is also a just God and will judge sin. Repeatedly, God warns that He is a God of judgment and will pour His wrath and those who reject Him and love sin and hate righteousness. (See John 3:19-20) False religion, as symbolized by Babylon, has now fallen and been completely destroyed. (Rev. 19:2) This event merits three Hallelujah's. Finally the blood of the slain saints through the ages is avenged. God truth is proclaimed and vindicated. Satan's power is stopped and truth will now be unmistakably known to all. The sin of rebellion can only be stopped by judging it or by a person accepting God's gift of grace and forgiveness. Sadly, most of the world refuses God's grace and chooses judgment instead of mercy, peace and heaven. This marks end of those who in rebellion chose not to bow to Christ.

All heaven rejoices because God is rejoicing. (Rev. 19:5-6) Only when God reigns is there peace and security in the world and now the Truth will sit on the throne in full view of all. There are no more doubters, atheists or deception on the earth. The truth has prevailed.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB. CHURCH AGE SAINTS COME AGAIN ON THE SCENE. (Revelation 19:7-10)

The marriage supper of the Lamb is come. (Rev. 19:7) The word marriage is the Greek word, "gamos" and in Revelation 19:7 is translated "marriage supper." "Is come" translates to "Is completed" indicating that at this time the marriage is consummated. The final stage of the oriental marriage which is the marriage supper is announced as being complete. The church age saints who are "the bride" are now with Christ forever.

In view here is the third and final stage of the oriental marriage which has three stages. First, there is the marriage contract which is arranged by the parents, generally while the bride and groom are children. Usually a dowry was given at this time. The second stage of the marriage occurs when the couple is of age, and the bridegroom with his friends goes to the house of the bride and escorts her to his home. (See Matt. 25:1-3) This will happen at the Rapture when Christ returns and comes for all believers prior to the Seven Year Tribulation. The third and final stage of the wedding occurs at the home of the bridegroom when his family gives a supper or feast. Guests are invited and join the families in celebrating the marriage. Jesus was an invited guest at the marriage supper in Cana. (John 2:1-12) After the marriage supper the bridegroom takes his new bride to their home and the marriage is now consummated.

Revelation 19:7 is the first mention of the church age believers, the bride of Christ, since Revelation 4. The "Bema" judgment has taken place in heaven during the seven year Tribulation.² The Bema judgment is the judgment for reward of Christians who are the "Bride of Christ." (1 Cor. 3:10-15) It takes place after the rapture and before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is exclusively for believers who were saved from Pentecost to the rapture which occurs before the Tribulation. (See Acts 2) A believer's reward is based on his service and faithfulness to the Lord during his Christian life. The unfaithful Christian will receive no reward and Paul says will suffer loss.

These church age believers are all dressed in "fine linen, clean and white." Note that the verse says the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. We know that only God is righteous and we have no righteousness apart from God as righteousness³ is a gift of God. (See Romans 3:21-22) The way believers receive this righteousness is by faith living their lives for the Lord Jesus. The deeds, or works, and way a Christian lives their lives in obedience with God's Word is rewarded by the Lord at the Bema judgment. Salvation and the imputed righteousness of God is a free gift, however rewards after salvation are earned. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 says: *"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire."*

At the Bema judgment, only believers of the Church Age are judged. The "works" they did on earth in the name of the Lord, and by faith and obedience to Him will be rewarded. This reward will make up the wedding garment of fine linen. Literally the Christian, during his life, makes his own wedding garment by serving and being faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lehman Strauss, states an important truth that is often overlooked. The Bema judgment will not be a happy experience for every Christian.⁴ Many will stand before Christ poorly dressed. Christians who live in disobedience to the Lord will have little or no reward. All who believed in Jesus Christ will be saved, but for some it will be a time of

shame as they did not bring glory and honor to the Lord by living their lives for the Lord. Thus, Christians during their lives make themselves ready for the wedding and marriage supper of the lamb.

The works we do for the Lord in His name and powers are symbolically referred to as being like gold, silver and precious stones. The works we did in the flesh and in pride and for self glory are referred to as wood, hay and stubble that will be destroyed in the fire. We need to be very careful in that we do not lose reward by seeking and basking in the praise of men for our good works. The Lord warns us not to *"let not your right hand know what your left hand is doing."* (Matt. 6:3) What we do for the Lord should be done in secret if possible. It is a poor trade when a Christian, glories in the praise of man and loses the reward of God.

The participants in the marriage supper are Jesus Christ the bridegroom, the church age believers, who are the bride, and the invited guests made up of Israel and the Tribulation saints. In Matthew 25:1-3 Jesus used a parable to warn Israel that the Messiah might come quickly and they would not be prepared. When the Messiah returns at the end of Daniel's 70th Week He brings His bride and the marriage supper is announced. During the Tribulation Jesus has been offering once again His kingdom to the Jews. The marriage supper of the Lamb will be a wonderful event for both the bride and the invited guests. It will be a time of great rejoicing as God's plans, made from the foundation of the earth come to past.

John is so overcome with the revelation of these events that he falls to his knees and attempts to worship the angel who gives him the prophecy. The angel immediately says, "Do not do it", because men are to only worship God. (Rev. 19:10) The verse ends stating that the spirit or reason for prophecy is designed to unfold the revelation of Jesus Christ. Before the event prophesied, prophecies reveal His plans through His word. At the time the prophecy is fulfilled it is a testimony that authenticates that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

CHRIST RETURNS WITH HIS ARMIES. Revelation 19:11-21

There is no question as to who verses 11-16, are referring to. This is the Lord Jesus Christ coming in all His power and glory to judge the earth and set up His everlasting Kingdom. (Rev. 19:11-16) Only Christ is righteous and true, and only he is the judge of this earth. He comes to make war against Satan, the Antichrist and the nations that follow them.

The reference to His eyes as appearing as fire refers to His coming in judgment. The crowns speak of His coming in authority as ruler over all the earth. (Rev. 1:14, 2:18) Jesus is coming to fulfill God's promises to Israel and bring in the Millennium. This will bring a time of peace on earth as Jesus Christ, rules over all the nations of earth from Jerusalem.

John records that Jesus has a name written that no man knew but Himself. The Bible uses over a hundred names for the Jesus, but the name that John saw He did not understand. Verse 12 states no man knew this special name, but Christ Himself. This name has not been revealed to man probably because man cannot comprehend it.

Verse 13 God reveals one of His names that is an important in confirming that Jesus is the Word as John 1:1 states. Many cults and false teachers have tried to deny that the Word in John 1:1, 14 is Jesus Christ. They do this in an attempt to deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and Trinity. Their motive is clear, because if Jesus is not God incarnate in man, He cannot be the Savior of the world. He would thus be only a man and no man can take away the sins of the world. This verse clearly and unmistakably states that Jesus Christ is "The Word of God" as John 1:1 states. Jesus will be wearing clothes that are dipped in the blood. In the same sentence it is said His name is the Word of God. This makes the emphatic connection that Jesus' blood which was shed for the sins of the world is tied to the absolute surety of His word in offering salvation to those who will by faith believe. Jesus' promise of salvation is validated by His shedding of His blood on the cross to provide the propitiation of the sins of the world.

Often it is heard that Jesus is a God of love and that He would not send anyone to hell. One reason for the Book of Revelation is to reveal to us the disastrous end of those who rebel against God. God is love, but He is also just in all He does. Jesus, who is God Himself, came to the earth and in the greatest demonstration of love ever done, suffered and died that men might by simple belief receive forgiveness for sin and eternal life. Yet, most men blatantly reject the love of God and thereby bring upon themselves the wrath of God. God desires that all men be saved, but He cannot save a person who refuses to accept God offer of saving grace.

Out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus comes the offer of redemption, but also from His mouth comes words of judgment described as being a sharp sword. Many have speculated that nuclear weapons will be used in this confrontation. The nations of the earth may resort to using such weapons against each other, but when Christ comes He simply speaks the words and destruction will ensue. Here at this battle which ends the seven year Tribulation evil men and nations will experience the full wrath of God. The magnitude of God's wrath is shown in the use of the phrase "the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God." It takes little imagination to compare God's act of judgment with the action of a winepress.

Another name or title is given in this passage for the Lord Jesus Christ which is "KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS." Title is said to be written on his vesture (clothing) and on His thigh. The garment of one who is sitting on a saddle drops from his thigh downward. It would seem Christ's title is inscribed on both the upper part of His garment, probably on His chest and also behind on the lower part of His clothing. Christ arrives riding on a horse and His army which follows Him to the earth are clothed with "fine linen, white and clean." These are the saints of God, saved during the dispensation of the Church Age, who have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Christ comes in judgment

to end the corruptive rule of man on this earth and He comes to rule with all power and a "rod of iron." (Rev. 19:15) Truly He is the "KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS." (Rev.19:16)

THE FINAL ENGAGEMENT OF ARMAGEDDON. 19:17-21

Birds such as crows, buzzards, eagles, and flesh eating fowl will feast on the dead bodies of the slain armies of men. (Rev. 19:17-18) While in Israel in October 2002 I was amazed at the great number of carrion eating birds in the area of Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley. I could not help but think that maybe these very birds or their offspring would be the one's called by the angel to gorge themselves in the future on the dead of Armageddon.

There will be a great gathering of the armies of the nations of the world which will include kings, military leaders, mighty men and horses and men bond and free, small and great. They are lead by the beast and it seems clear that the reason all these have gathered in Israel is to destroy this little nation which ultimately means they are there to fight against God Himself. The Bible abounds with prophecies concerning God's plans for Israel and the coming Millennium. Sinful men, leaders of nations who have put their trust in the Antichrist in reality foolishly think they can fight against Almighty God. Satan Himself is the biggest fool there is because He thinks he can exalt himself above God. Blinded and seeped in pride Satan and those that follow him have since the beginning fought against God. They have not prevailed or prevented God from fulfilling His promises and completing His plans. God has been long suffering, but now His patience is ended and He pours out His wrath on the God haters.

Matthew 24:27-30 states Christ's coming will be as lightening flashing from the east to the west. The whole earth will see the sign of the Lord's coming in the heavens. When the armies of men see that Jesus Christ is coming to earth they stop fighting against each other and in unison turn to fight the returning Christ. This is in fact an invasion from space. None in the great armies will be spared, and all be killed both great and small. (Rev. 19:17-19)

Christ in short order takes the Antichrist, and the false prophet that deceived so many people and casts them into the "lake of fire" which is Gehenna. They are the first to inhabit Gehenna that was prepared for the Devil and his angels. (See Matt. 25:41) This is a fitting, but terrible judgment they will experience. They will have all eternity to endure the torments of hell realizing they could have had the joys of heaven, but instead chose to rebel against God. The men who followed the Antichrist and the warring nations are slain by the sword that proceeds from the mouth of Jesus Christ. Jesus simply speaks and these rebellious and sinful men are instantly slain. Verse 21, states the "remnant" or the rest of unsaved humanity are also slain by the Lord Jesus Christ. The earth is completely purged of the unbelievers. Matthew 24:40-41 speaks of this judgment which is in reality the rapture of the unsaved. These who die are cast into Hades, a temporary place of torment, to await the final judgment of men, the Great White Throne Judgment as are all who die unsaved. (Rev.20:10-15)

Verse 17, revealed that in anticipation of this great slaughter, an angel beckons to the birds on earth to gather in Palestine for a feast on the flesh of those about to die. Matthew states, "*For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*" (Matthew 24:28) Now the birds feast on the bodies of the dead.

Ezekiel 39:11-13 states that it will take seven months for Israel to bury all the dead that this great battle.

End Notes:

¹ Twenty four elders. Revelation 4:4 the elders are seen sitting around the throne of God dressed in white linen with crowns upon their heads. In Revelation 4:10 the elders fall down and worship the Lord casting their crowns before the throne. Again in Revelation 5:8, the twenty four elders worship the Lord after He takes the seven sealed book. Once more in Revelation 5:14 the twenty four elders are seen worshipping the Lord after the new song is sung. Revelation 11:16 finds the elders once more worshipping the Lord after the second woe of the seventh Trumpet Judgment.

² See page 2 of these study notes for more information on the Bema judgment.

³ Righteousness simply means being right. The righteous are right with God and live according to God's word.

⁴ Lehman Strauss, The Book of Revelation, Neptune, New Jersey:Loizeaux Brothers, 1977, pg. 320.