

Chapter 19

INTRODUCTION:

Seals have been opened. Trumpets have sounded. Bowls of wrath have been poured out. And most recently, the Harlot has been silenced. As the battle between Good and Evil rages, let's set the stage of chapter 19. It can be divided into 3 distinct parts:

1. Verses 1-3: rejoicing in heaven over the fall of the harlot
2. Verses 5-10: an anticipatory view of the uniting of all the faithful in heaven after all these struggles are over.
3. Verses 11-21: the ongoing battle between Good and Evil -- Armageddon -- and the overthrow of the beasts.

The text follows. Read it carefully and let the three scenes form in your minds...

**Rejoicing in Heaven**

**“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.**

**The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

**And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the**

Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

#### The Rider on a White Horse

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

This chapter begins in a familiar way, with the phrase, “*And after these things...*” This time “these things” are the destruction of the Harlot. This is a phrase John commonly uses to introduce another part of the revelation, a new “phase” if you will. It doesn’t necessarily indicate

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a chronology to the events depicted, but in this case the chronology is clear. It's as if he's saying "And then..."

***"I heard a great voice..."*** As we have already seen several times, this great voice is speaking a heavenly utterance! In this case we are not told who is speaking, but we do know it is ***"of much people in heaven."*** Whether it is ALL the heavenly inhabitants or not, we're not told, but the fact remains that there are lots of people in heaven at this point! From the beginning of our study we have seen some of them:

1. The one sitting on the Throne (4:2-3)
2. The Lamb (5:6)
3. The 24 elders (4:4)
4. The four living creatures (4:6-8)
5. The ones under the altar (martyrs) (6:9)
6. The innumerable multitude (7:9)
7. A myriad of angels. (5:11)

And, of course, we have what is referred to as the "heavenly host" elsewhere in the scriptures. I suspect it is all of them! ***"Alleluia"*** is the same as our word "Hallelujah", and means "Praise ye Jehovah!" It is translated in verse 5 as ***"Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."*** The particular word "Hallelujah" is almost always used in conjunction with the punishment of the wicked, and here is no exception as it refers to the punishment of the Harlot. The next phrase John hears is ***"Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God."*** All praise that belongs to God in heaven – the creator of everything that is! He is the Omnipotent, the Glorious One! He gave us salvation, therefore He is deserving of our praise and honor!

Then we see the phrase, ***"And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."*** This smoke is coming from the burning of Babylon (the Harlot) whose destruction is total and final.

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At this point, familiar characters we first saw in the throne scene re-emerge: The 24 elders and the 4 living beings fall down and worship God (on the Throne) saying ***“Amen; alleluia!”*** Do you remember who the 24 elders represent? All of the faithful from both sides of the Cross. On one side of the throne were 12 seats representing the faithful under the Law of Moses, and on the other side were the 12 which represented the faithful under the new covenant.

***“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, ‘Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.’”*** I don’t believe this is God’s voice because of it asking for praise to be given TO Jehovah, the one sitting on the great throne. John describes the voice as if ***“it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”*** All this is given us in an attempt to capture the magnitude and power of this voice. How extraordinary it must have been to hear it.

***“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready.”*** In the Old Testament the relationship between Jehovah and His people is often referred to as a marriage, so obviously this terminology began long before the New Testament was written. Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel all use it. Perhaps it would be a good idea to discuss exactly what is implied by it. Let’s look at the account of Mary and Joseph in Matthew 1: ***“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.”***

As you can see, Mary is spoken of as being *espoused* to Joseph. According to Thayer that word means *“wooded, asked for or promised in marriage.”* In other words: Engaged. However, in verse 19 Joseph is called Mary’s *husband*. This is because, for the Hebrew people, that “espousal” was much more sacred than it is in our society today. So, even though they had not yet *“come together”* (consummated the marriage), Mary was considered to be Joseph’s wife

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even during the engagement. In our passage today, the church is in the “engagement period” with Christ, preparing herself for the wedding, which will take place in chapter 21.

So, the church being called the “bride of Christ” carries with it the same sacred tone as Mary being called the “bride of Joseph” even before their relationship was consummated. The purity of the relationship that exists between the “betrothed” (those faithful Christians standing firm in the face of all persecution) and Jesus stands in stark contrast to the impure union the Harlot had with the unfaithful.

The righteous are arrayed in “*fine linen, clean and white.*” This description of something without spot or blemish represents that which is holy and pure in contrast to the harlot’s sensuous, gaudy apparel intended to seduce those who looked upon her.

John is then told to write “*Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.*” Notice who is partaking in the marriage supper – the faithful church of Christ! Remember Chapter 3:14? “*If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.*” The last part of verse 9 says “*These are the true sayings of God.*” Some commentators suggest the expression “*true sayings*” refers back to various other parts of this book. While all of God’s sayings are certainly true, I believe here He’s speaking specifically of blessed ones – the faithful – being invited to the marriage feast. I would, in fact, apply this saying to the entire section that started back in chapter 17.

Then John says, “*I fell at his feet to worship him.*” The response is: “*And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*” Why did John fall at his feet, because he thought it was Jesus? I think it is more likely he was just overwhelmed. The reproof from the speaker, though, is enough to assure us that no type of worship is to be given to anyone other than a true deity.

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And then John sees the heavens opened, and he beholds a white horse. The Rider sitting on the horse was called **“Faithful and True”** and it is said **“*In righteousness He doth judge and make war!*”** The destruction of Babylon (the Harlot) has been declared, but the final overthrow of the two beasts and the dragon is still pending. The war continues...

**“*And I saw heaven opened ...*”** Three times before, this has happened: chapter 4 when John saw the throne scene through a door, chapter 11 when the temple of God was opened and John saw the ark of God’s covenant, and then in chapter 15 where a tabernacle in heaven was opened and the angels with the seven bowls came out. And now, a **“*white horse is seen.*”** I’m sure you remember the white horse at the opening of the first seal. Throughout the New Testament – especially in Revelation – the color white almost always represents heavenly things. The only exceptions are Matt. 5:36 and John 4:35 where it is actually literal. So this horse is a heavenly horse. In the Old Testament, the horse is the symbol of battle or war. And to the Romans the white horse was the symbol of victory, so I believe both of those symbols apply here: The “white horse” is a heavenly horse – fit for the One who sits upon it – and symbolizes victory over the dragon and the two beasts in the ongoing war called Armageddon.

We know the one sitting on the horse can be none other than Jesus, because in chapter 3:14 the term “Faithful and True” is applied to Him, and Isaiah 11:4 records, in reference to his (Isaiah’s) prophecy of the Messiah that, **“*with righteousness ... He shall judge.*”** John says of this rider of the white horse, **“*He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True...*”** This begs the question, “Who is going to be judged?” Not everyone, because this is not the final judgment! This is the judgment against all those who stand in His way along the way... right now, as you are reading this! You and I are included in this scene, this judgment, so which side are we on?

A further description is given about the rider: **“*His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He Himself.*”** We know from chapter 1:13 that fire is indicative of “purifying.” It is able to discern purity, to judge honestly and fairly, not the outward appearance, but what is inside. John says He also had

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many crowns on His head. This is NOT the Greek word “*Stephanos*” – the crown of victory, but “*diadem*” – the kingly ornament, the same word used for the crowns on the dragon and the first beast! Do you remember how many “diadems” the dragon had? Seven – enough to exert complete power over his subjects.. And how many did the beast from the sea have? Ten – sufficient to wield power over those who followed him. But here, Jesus has “*Many Diadems*” because He now comes as the king of all kings... to Judgment! Revelation 17:14 “*...the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.*”

“*And He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself...*” There has been much written about this name that no one knows. Evidently, it is a new name. Looking back at Chapter 3:12, in the letter to the church at Philadelphia Jesus said, “*Him that over cometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*” All of the faithful will be given that “new name. It doesn’t matter what it is... only that we receive it.

Then it is said that He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. This may come from Isaiah 63 where it is written, “*I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*” This blood that is sprinkled upon His garments is unquestionably the blood of His enemies. Then John says His name is called, “*The Word of God.*” That exact phrase occurs 44 times in the New Testament (KJV), but only here in Revelation and in John’s gospel: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*”

In verse 14 we are told that “*the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*” This verse is often written about and greatly misunderstood. A popular view (held by the “futurists”) depicts this army as a great host of heavenly beings and angels who minister to Jehovah as described in Daniel 7:10. I assume they are referring to Jesus having said that He could have called 12 legions of angels to His aid.

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Many believe the battle of Armageddon will be fought by the Devil and his army against Jesus and this great host of heavenly beings. I see no benefit that would provide. In this study we have repeatedly read of this ongoing battle waged between those who follow Christ and those who do not.

Hence, I believe it is more logical to view these armies following Him as the victorious saints – those who resisted the influence of the beasts, encouraged the unfaithful members to turn away from the Dragon, and dedicated their lives to the work of converting the lost. Back in chapter 3:5, it is said *“he that overcometh...the same shall be clothed in white raiment”* just like those victorious saints standing beneath the altar in chapter 6 and before the Throne in chapter 7. And of course, the Bride of Christ back in verse 8 is robed in white linen.

Then John tells us *“out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations...”* We’ve already read of a *“sharp, two edged sword”* in chapter 1:16, able to discern, judge and convict. However there is a difference here. In this passage the sword is the Greek word *“rhomphaia.”* It is a longer and heavier sword than the *“machaira”* used back in chapter 1. It still suggests power, but with a willingness and a readiness to go into battle. He who wields this sword is prepared for warfare!

John adds *“...and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”* We first read of the *“wine of the wrath of God”* and the *“winepress of wrath.”* back in chapter 14. Here, the two symbols are used together. Unfortunately, as this battle progresses, there will be losses of the faithful! Some will find the battle too hard to fight, and give in to the influences of the beasts. We know from the last few chapters that any name written in the Book of Life can be erased. But those who remain faithful – already knowing that Jesus will win this battle – will inherit that great promise of living for all eternity with the heavenly host.

John says that on Jesus’ vesture and thigh is written: *“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,”* Many have discussed just how this might have looked. Of course we don’t know, but the important thing is to recognize that it was very conspicuous so as to be easily seen by



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everyone. The name, ***“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”*** was the title assigned to the Lamb back in Chapter 17:14. Notice the different names used in this chapter alone: in verse 12, the ***“name no one knew except himself.”*** In verse 11, ***“Faithful and True,”*** in verse 13, ***“The Word of God,”*** and here in verse 16 His name is ***“King of Kings and Lord of Lords!”*** Throughout the Bible, Jesus has many names and titles. He is both the ***“lamb, led to the slaughter”*** that Isaiah describes – meek and gentle, merciful and kind to those faithful followers, and the ***“King of Kings,”*** the ruler of the kings of the earth and conqueror of ALL!

And now John sees another angel standing in the sun, crying with a loud voice saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ***“Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God...”*** Perhaps you remember back in chapter 8:13, after the fourth angel had sounded his trumpet, there was an angel (eagle) flying in *mid-heaven* crying with a loud voice saying, ***“Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth...”*** Also, in chapter 14:6, the angel flying in the ***“midst of heaven”*** had the gospel to preach to all those who dwell on the earth. Well... this ***“standing in the sun”*** is the same as the ***“mid-heaven”*** reference in those places – a place where he can appropriately issue his summons, where all can see and hear! And did you notice that these ***“mid-heaven”*** appearances or the ***“saying in a loud voice”*** are only used when the message is being delivered to the unrighteous? Why? Location, location, location! Those who are righteous are said to be “close to Him.” They have drawn near! It is the unrighteous who have pulled away or separated themselves from Him, so removed are they that they can only be reached with a loud voice. Among the birds that fly in the midst of heaven are the “carrion fowls”: vultures, eagles, hawks, In other words, birds that eat flesh. They are told to ***“Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.”***

Let’s contrast this to the marriage supper of verse 9: in it, the righteous will be fed, whereas in this one, the unrighteous will BE food. Of course, don’t take this literally! It is symbolic of the complete and devastating defeat of the enemies of the Lamb. What will they be “supping” on? ***“That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.”*** This is more or less a parallel to Ezekiel’s vision of

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Jehovah's destruction of Gog and Magog – heathen forces of the time which were antagonistic toward God and His people and His purposes. The idea conveyed is the extent of God's judgment! It will be widespread and complete – NONE will escape it!

This chapter ends with the first beast that came up from the sea in chapter 13. He stands both for the evil desires and promises of the Dragon, and with the second beast, the false prophet. They work together. The “kings of the earth” are the ones summoned by the three unclean spirits that came out of the mouths of the Dragon, his two Beasts, and their army of followers and converts (the false prophet) depicted in chapter 16.

Here we are: the whole world gathered together for the battle of Armageddon. Who are these “*kings, captains, mighty men, free and bond, small and great*” referenced above in verse 18? Homer Hailey says, “*In this war, the devil recruits from every walk of life; he has some of all these on earth in his army.*” The message for us is this: you're fighting in this battle whether you realize it or not. There are no “conscientious objectors” in this war. Every single person who has ever lived or who will ever live is a soldier. The only question is, are you on the team destined to victory or the one headed for destruction in the lake of fire? Why can't we just be neutral, you may wonder? I'm not a bad person, not evil. We live in a society that glorifies the adage “Live and let live.” Here's why: Jesus said in Matthew 12:30, “***He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.***”

So... what is the outcome? Verses 20 and 21 make it plain: “***And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.***”

“**The remnant**” – that would be those that fought in the beast's army – were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the white horse, Jesus Christ. And the fowls were “filled with their flesh,” No dignity in this death!

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This leaves the Dragon himself. We have yet to witness the outcome of the personal battle between him and Jesus. That is the work of chapter 20. Then the vision will be expanded, or advanced one step further so we get to see the final judgment. I'll leave you with a preview:

***“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”***