

“The Lamb’s Victory (Chap. 19)”

INTRODUCTION

The action comes back to God’s throne room in heaven, and the elders, living creatures, and the multitude of saints rejoice over the ruin of Babylon (chap. 18). But the shouts soon move from the fall of Babylon to the celebration of the rise of her counterpart, the Bride of the Lamb. Then, at last the long-awaited moment arrives: He who “is to come” does come.

NOTES ON CHAPS. 19

1. The word “**Hallelujah**” (repeated four times in this chapter) occurs only here in the New Testament. It is the transliteration of a Hebrew word used often in the Psalms. *Halal* means “praise” and *Jah* is “Yahweh, Jehovah or ‘the Lord.’” So “*Hallelujah*” means “Praise the Lord.”
2. Chapter 19 describes a **wedding** of the Lamb and his bride (v.7ff). Several Old Testament and New Testament images describe the Kingdom of God as a wedding or marriage feast (Hosea 19:7; Matthew 22:2). Among Jews, a marriage involved two events, the betrothal and the wedding. After the betrothal ceremony, the couple were considered legally married (except they did not live together). The wedding began as a procession to the bride’s house and then back to the groom’s house for the feast. Interpreters of this text wonder if the “bride” is meant to be understood as Israel (the Jews), the church, or both.
3. The **bride** is the third woman of Revelation (cf. the woman in childbirth in chap. 12 and the prostitute of chap. 17). The bride is further described in chaps. 21. The interesting comparison between the prostitute and the bride are that they both seem to be cities. It is especially interesting to compare their garments (17:3-4; 19:7-8).
4. If the church or Israel is the bride, then who are the “**invited**” **guests** of v.9? Some believe the guests are those who did not participate in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church, yet later believed in Christ and were redeemed. Others say that Jesus’ parables (re. Matthew 22:2-14) show us how believers can be depicted both corporately as the Bride and individually as guests of the feast.
5. Who is the **rider**? Compare the description of the rider and John’s vision of “one like the son of man” in chapter 1. The ascription of v. 16 comes from Isaiah 24:22 (repeated in 2 Peter 2:4). The “name...that no one knows” might be the name of God, Yahweh, which the Jews held to be so holy that they never pronounced it (and said “the Lord” instead). It might also be the “name that is above every name” in Philippians 2:9-11. As the rider’s full essence is beyond human comprehension, so also must be his true name.
6. **The final battle**, foreshadowed in 16:14-16, takes place in 19:19-21 between the forces of the Lamb and the Beast (cf. 13:1-10 and 17:8). The false prophet of the Beast is described in 13:11-17. Both are thrown into a “fiery lake of burning sulfur.” Punishment by fire is prominent in Jewish writings, and came to be equated with the “hell” of final judgement.

7. The “**great supper of God**” (vss. 17-18) and the gorging of the birds (v.21) is a grim contrast to the “wedding supper of the Lamb.”

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the implications for you that Christ's relationship with the Church is described as a marriage? Do you act as if you are “betrothed” to Christ?
2. Why does the angel correct John's posture of worship in 19:10? Do you often mistakenly direct your worship to something or someone other than the true Christ (i.e. a teacher, preacher, church, or group)?
3. What are your impressions of the rider? What does his description tell you about him?
4. Is there any significance in the fact that the battle seems so one-sided? And is it significant that the beast and the false prophet are thrown into the fire alive while the rest are killed?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Compare the prostitute in chapter 17 to the Bride of chaps. 19, 21, and 22. Compare and contrast regarding these points:
 - Relations with the kings of the earth
 - Where they live
 - What they wear
 - The drink they offer
 - The mood of their people
 - Their inhabitants
 - Their fruit
 - Their character
 - Their relationship with God.
2. Study more about the feast of the kingdom of God in Isaiah 25:6-8 and Matthew 26:28-29.