

REVELATION

Seeing, Knowing and Serving Jesus Christ
Today at the Edge of History

Chapter 19

Text: Revelation 19:1-21 - Hallelujah!

Hallelujah!

19 After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

"Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ²for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

³ And again they shouted:

"Hallelujah!

The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

"Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"

⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God."

¹⁰ At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The Rider on the White Horse

¹¹ I saw heaven standing open and there before me

was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and

on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

king of kings and lord of lords.

¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small & great."

¹⁹ Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰ But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The warrior Messiah, seated on the white horse, "learned the art of warfare," as St. Hillary so neatly put it, "when he overcame the world." He has a single weapon, his word. He wages war by what he says, which is an articulation of who he is.

- Eugene Peterson, Reversed Thunder, p.164



Alonso Cano: *St. John Falls at the Feet of the Angel* (1650)

Read & Reflect - 19:1-21

First Reading/First Impression: One key figure in this chapter is "The Victorious Rider." What name would you give to His white horse? *Lamb's Mount* *Bridegroom's Broom* *Evil's Doom* *Mr. Ed-ifier*
 Pure White Beauty *Donkey in Disguise* *Trigger of Truth* *Freein' Steed*
 Other _____

Second Reading/The Main Point: The other two key figures in this text are "The Condemned Prostitute" & "The Blessed Bride." What are some basic differences between a prostitute and a bride?

<i>A Prostitute Is/Does...</i>	<i>A Bride Is/Does...</i>
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Search

A. The Heavenly "Hallelujah!" - 19:1-8

List all the reasons the heavenly multitude gives for shouting "Hallelujah!" (= "Praise to Yahweh - the Lord!")

Who is in the "multitude" (see verse 5)

B. John and the Angel - 19:9-10

19:9 - What does the angel tell John to do?

What does it mean truly to be "invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb?" (see Matthew 22:1-14)

19:10 - What does John do? How does the angel respond? Why? (Note the difference from what happened in 1:17)

C. The Faithful Rider - 19:11-16

What names are given to this Rider? (verses 11, 12, 13 & 16) Who is He? How do you know?

What other images are used to describe Him? (Compare these to the description in 1:12-16. What is the same?)

Who follows Him? How are they described? What does this mean?

D. The Last Battle - 19:17-21

19:17-18, 21 - To whom/ what does the angel call here? What is this "great supper of God?" How does it compare to the "wedding supper" (19:7-9)?

19:17-18, 21 - Who is the "food" for this vultures' supper (compare to 19:5)?

19:19-21 - How is this great & final battle described? The "kings" gather against the Rider, but do they ever strike him? What is the only weapon mentioned? Whose is it? How effective is it? Is there a military conflict at all?

Apply

1. What does the description (or lack thereof) of the "last battle" suggest about the importance of human power and effectiveness of military might to win the final victory? (Compare it to the careful and longer description of the Rider Himself!)

2. How do people tend to worship the "messenger" rather than God today? Why is this a bad idea?

3. What reality expressed in this chapter makes you want to lift up your voice and shout "Hallelujah!?" [Go ahead and shout!]

The Bride is as sexual a metaphor as the Whore, but it forms an absolute contrast. For the Whore, sex is in the service of commerce; with the Bride, sex is devoted to love. For the Whore, sex is a contract; for the Bride, sex is a life commitment. For the Whore, sex is a calculation; for the Bride, sex is an offering... Bride-worship is always at an immediate disadvantage in competition with Whore-worship, for Whore-worship is indulgent and lusty getting, while Bride-worship is sacrificed and faithful giving. That is why Whore-worship is such a continuous threat to Bride-worship. And why we need St. John's violent caricature of the religious advertising that endangers our endurance and faithfulness.
- Eugene Peterson, Reversed Thunder, p.147



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Summary... The scene of John's vision changes once again from earth to the throne room of heaven. Hallelujah! The multitude shouts, which means literally "Praise to You, Yahweh!" The recent destruction of Babylon (all dragon-empowered, beast-led, evil-inspired human attempts to take from God His place of authority and power--going all the way back to the Tower of Babel) is celebrated, but the focus quickly moves on to the eternal future that awaits Christ and His Bride (see below). Beginning here at verse 11 and concluding at the beginning of chapter 21 with the "new heaven and new earth," a series of seven visions make final preparations for the glorious end of history God brings. Each begins with the words "I saw," and to begin with what John sees is a "white horse" and then the war to end all wars. Concerning this final battle toward which John's vision has been moving since it began, the comments below from Dr. Bruce Metzger (*Breaking the Code*) offer an inspired perspective:

"...the man of Patmos makes no statement about the battle, which is evidence that he intends to describe not an earthly military campaign but a spiritual struggle. He portrays only the result--the overwhelming defeat of the enemies of Christ... It is noteworthy that the victory is won by Christ's word alone without any military help from the faithful." (p.92)

19:1 - "**Hallelujah!**"... used only here in the New Testament (see last issue)... A particular group of Psalms make frequent use of this word. They are called the "Hallel" Psalms (113-118), and they were sung especially at Passover time. It is likely when Jesus and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives after the Last Supper and after "singing a hymn" (Mark 14:26), the hymn was one of these Psalms. So here is another connection to the Exodus, the Passover and Jesus' re-formation of those events... A new meal has been instituted and is about to be fully realized as "the wedding supper..."

19:5 - "**small and great**"... believers come from all classes, all abilities, all levels of maturity...

19:7-8 - "**Let us rejoice and be glad**"... This phrase is only found in one other place in the New Testament: In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount when he tells those who have suffered persecution for His sake to do so (Matthew 5:11-12)... "**wedding of the Lamb... his bride**"... Jesus told a parable about a king and a "marriage feast" (Matthew 22:1-14). Here it is!... The Bible is full of references where the relationship between God and His people is compared to that of a husband and wife (see Isaiah 54:4; 61:10; Jeremiah 2:2; Ezekiel 16:8; John 3:29; 14:3; Ephesians 5:25; 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Rev. 2:4; 3:20)

19:9 - "**Blessed are those who are invited...**" This is the fourth of seven "Beatitude Sayings" in the Book (see 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14)

19:10 - "**fell at his feet to worship**"... even John can misdirect praise!... "**Don't do it! Worship God**"... the angel swiftly corrects the mistake...

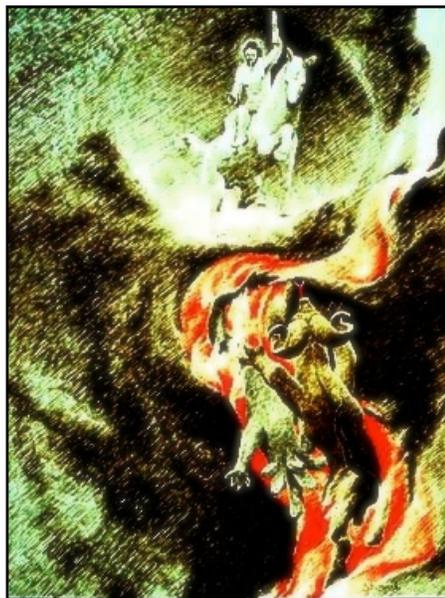
19:11 - "**I saw**"... Literally a command: "Look!" (again, the Greek word *IDOU*)... "**heaven standing open**"... marking another major section in the Book... And what John sees is similar to what he saw in his opening vision (1:9 ff.): He sees a person!... "**white horse**"... a different one than we saw earlier (6:2)... white is a symbol of purity and the horse is a symbol of war (unlike the donkey which a king rides in times of peace)... Note the contrast from when Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday!... "**rider... Faithful and True**"... from the following description (19:12-16, compare to 1:12-16) it is clear this is Jesus returning as Warrior-Messiah-King...

19:12 - "**on his head are many crowns**"... the beast had 10 crowns on 7 heads. Jesus has more, and on only one head... "*many spheres of*

sovereignty under one head." (J. Ramsey Michaels, *Revelation*)... "**a**

name... no one knows but he himself"... this indicates two things: 1. Jesus is under no one else's control and 2. With all we know about Him, there is still more to learn!... *There are no graduates from the Jesus School.*" (Dale Brunner)

19:13 - "**robe dipped in blood**"... imagery from



John Steczynski: *King of Kings*

Isaiah 63:1-3 where garments are stained with the blood of the enemies, is transformed to indicate the saving death of Christ the King: the blood is on the robe *before* the battle not after it! It is His own blood! The battle was fought and won on the Cross!... "**his name is the Word of God**"... see John 1:1 and Hebrews 1:1-2... It is in Christ that God has spoken fully and finally!

19:15 - "**iron scepter**"... see Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 2:27 and 12:5... "**winepress**"... see Revelation 14:20... 19:17 - "**birds... great supper of God**"... the ugly imagery comes from Ezekiel 38 & 39... this meal is a gruesome parallel to the glorious "wedding supper of the Lamb"!

19:18 - "**...small and great**"... the enemies of Christ also come in all classes, abilities, etc. (see above)

19:21 - "**sword that came out of the mouth of the rider**"... (see also 19:15) -- Jesus' only weapon is His infinitely powerful word of absolute truth... The battle between good and evil is over simply because Jesus speaks and says so... Just as at the beginning of creation (*And God said 'Let there be!' and there was!*), in which Jesus participated (John 1:3 - *Through him all things were made...*), so at the end of history...