The Book of Revelation

Zanesville, OH | Wednesday/Sunday Bible Study

**Chapter 19**

* **19:1-6– Doxology to God for Babylon’s Defeat**
  + **Verse 1**– As chapter 18 came to an end depicting the destruction of “Babylon the Great,” chapter 19 commences with a doxology to God for His judgment of the city. A multitude in heaven produces altogether a loud voice that proclaims, “praise to Yahweh” (Hallelujah; cf. Psa. 106:1; 111:1; 115:18; 146:1; 148:1; 149:1; 150:1).
  + The multitude may be angelic hosts or the triumphant people of God or perhaps a mix of both. Whoever they are is not as important as who they are praising. God is the center of this doxology because the salvation and power belongs rightfully to Him (cf. 4:10-11; 5:9-13).
  + The doxology is akin to the lauding given to God by the redeemed in 7:10-12. Salvation and power and glory belong solely and rightfully to God (cf. 1 Chron. 29:11; Psa. 3:8; Jon. 2:9; Acts 4:12).
  + **Verse 2**– The doxology given to God is because of His righteous and just ways (cf. Deut. 32:4; Psa. 19:9; Isa. 25:1; Rev. 15:3; 16:5-7). His ways are seen as righteous and just because He has judged the harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality.
  + Furthermore, His ways are righteous and just since He has avenged the blood of His bondservants on her with her judgment (cf. Deut. 32:35, 43; 2 Kings 9:7; Psa. 79:10). This is an answer to the question of 6:10.
  + **Verse 3**– The second “Hallelujah” comes as they praise God for the smoke that rises forever (cf. Isa. 34:8-10). This stands in stark contrast to the response of the earthly rulers, merchants and maritime professionals in 18:9-19. God is praised for the fulfillment of His word (cf. 14:11).
  + **Verse 4**– The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures now join in as they approve of the praise being offered to God (cf. 4:4, 8-11; 5:8, 11-12, 14). They also exclaim “Hallelujah!” It is never wrong thing nor is it ever an inappropriate time to praise God for who He is and all He has done (cf. 1 Chron. 16:36; Psa. 41:13; 89:52; 106:48).
  + **Verse 5**– A voice (an angel or perhaps Jesus) urges the bond-servants small and great to praise God whom they fear for what He has done for them in reference to avenging their blood (cf. Psa. 115:13; 148:11-13).
* **19:6-10– The Marriage Scene: Lamb and Bride**
  + **Verse 6**– John hears the loud resounding voice of a multitude akin to that of the sound of many waters (cf. Ezek. 1:24; 43:3; Rev. 1:15; 14:2) and mighty peals of thunder (cf. 4:5; 14:2 proclaiming the fourth “praise Yahweh” (Hallelujah). This praise is specifically related to the reign of God.
  + His judgments and execution of His wrath against His enemies and the enemies of His people points to the fact that He sits on the throne and reigns. No one can thwart His will nor His judgments when He has determined that they should take place (cf. Psa. 47:2; 93:1; 97:1; 99:1; Rev. 4:3, 9-11; 11:15-18).
  + **Verse 7**– A call for rejoicing and being glad is made (cf. Matt. 5:12). Because the only other time in which this phrase is used is at the culmination of the beatitudes which anticipate a heavenly reward, the meaning of this verse must be related to what Jesus stated in Matthew.
  + Rejoicing and being glad echoes a number of OT passages in addition to Matt. 5:12 that relate to God granting justice to His people (cf. Deut. 32:43; Psa. 48:11; 95:1-3; 107:42). God is glorified in addition to this rejoicing because the *“marriage of the Lamb has come”* and the bride is ready.
  + This verse seems to be anticipating the consummation. This is true because the consummation is often spoken of a marriage and the feast that follows (cf. Matt. 22:1-14; 25:1-13).
  + This verse is not suggesting that the second coming has come and gone but rather that the saints’ faithfulness to God despite persecution allows them to be ready for this event. It is important to understand the historical nature of the concept in this verse.
  + Before a marriage in ancient times, there was the betrothal process in which a man was essentially engaged to the woman he was going to marry. This “engagement” was considered much more serious then than it does now (cf. Matt. 1:18-20).
  + After the betrothal process, the actual wedding ceremony and feast took place which consummated the relationship. The church is Christ’s bride as evidenced by passages like Rom. 7:4 and Eph. 5:22-27. But are we married to Christ now or simply betrothed?
  + The most appropriate response is both, but one more so than the other. The ancient betrothal process was considered to be, in effect, a marriage. However, the full blessings of the marriage was not yet had until the ceremony and feast. Thus the church is betrothed to Christ now and effectively married (cf. Hos. 2:19-20; 2 Cor. 11:2) but the fullness of this marriage is yet to be experienced.
  + **Verse 8**– The appropriate clothes for the bride is fine linen bright and clean (cf. 3:4-5, 18; 7:13-14). These clothes are tied to their faithfulness and their faith which has been tested by fire (cf. 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12). They are blameless, spotless and pure because of Christ’s blood and holding fast to Him (cf. Matt. 22:11-12; Gal. 3:26-27; Eph. 5:27).
  + **Verse 9**– The voice now urges John to write the beatitude concerning those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. In the scriptures, this invitation carries weight and it means that those to whom this invitation has been extended, they will be with God forever and ever (cf. Isa. 25:6-8; Matt. 22:1-14).
  + **Verse 10**– John apparently falls down so as the worship the speaker but is instructed not to do this since he is a fellow servant (cf. Acts 10:25-26). This may suggest that the speaker is not God (Jesus, Father or Spirit) but rather someone else.
  + Only God is to be worshipped and accepts true worship (cf. Ex. 34:14; Matt. 4:10; Jn. 4:23-24; 9:35-38; Rev. 4:9-11; 5:8-14). He identifies himself as one who holds to the testimony of Jesus (cf. 12:17). That the testimony of Jesus is the “spirit of prophecy” points to the fact that it is the very inspired word of God (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
* **19:11-21– The Victorious Rider on the White Horse**
  + In Revelation 16:12-16 (Battle at Har-Magedon), the beast, false prophet and dragon gather together the “kings of the earth” for war against God. Those verses anticipate some kind of battle to take place between the forces of evil and good.
  + Revelation 19:11-21 connects us to that scene as the forces of good are now introduced and the hotly anticipated “battle” scene comes to a very anti-climactic end. God once again demonstrated who He is, what He does and what He is capable of doing.
  + **Verse 11**– This scene does not speak of the second coming of Christ. The wording of this scene is very different from Matt. 25:31-46 which does speak of the consummation. After the doxology to God and the anticipation of the consummation to come, John sees heaven opened (cf. Ezek. 1:1; Rev. 4:1; 11:19; 15:5) and The Rider on the White Horse proceeds.
  + The white horse conveys the idea of holiness, purity and vindication (cf. 1:14; 2:17; 3:4-5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 14:14). This white horse is likely not the same horse of 6:2 for both contextual and descriptive reasons.
  + The one who sits on the horse is described as “Faithful and True” echoing earlier sentiments about Jesus in Revelation (1:5; 3:7, 14). The idea of being faithful and true is seen in vindicating the name of God and His people by judging His enemies and bringing evil to an end.
  + That this is true is evident by the end of the verse which states His judging and waging war is done in righteousness (cf. Psa. 45:3-7; 72:2-4; 96:13; 98:9; Isa. 45:21; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15; Rev. 15:3-7). The Warrior like Messiah will severely punish the forces of evil and defend His name as the true, Holy God who fights for His people.
  + **Verse 12**– The Rider has eyes like a flame of fire (cf. Dan. 10:6; Rev. 1:14; 2:18). No one can escape the penetrating sovereignty of this Rider. The many diadems on His head stands as a contrast to the seven diadems of the dragon (12:3) and the ten diadems of the sea beast (13:1). “Many” indicates unlimited, absolute and universal reign/sovereignty.
  + Some suggest that the name which no one knows (cf. 2:17) is the tetragrammaton: **YHWH.** Others contend it is the name given above every name (Phil. 2:9-11). Most likely it refers to a name that only He knows and when we see Him face to face we will know that name. It’s a certain level of intimacy that can only be achieved in Heaven (cf. 1 Jn. 3:2).
  + **Verses 13**– His robe being dipped (covered/sprinkled) in blood alludes to Isa. 63:1-6 which speaks of God treading down His enemies (cf. 14:19-20). In Isaiah the warrior figure does this to avenge and redeem His people. The same is occurring here in Revelation.
  + The Rider’s name is the “Word of God.” This takes us back to Jn. 1:1, 14, 18 and 1 Jn. 1:1 which emphasize Jesus as the fullness of the revelation of God’s will. Jesus will execute the sovereign will of God and He being the Word guarantees that evil will fall (cf. Isa. 55:10-11).
  + **Verse 14**– The armies in heaven follow the Rider. They too are on white horses and they are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. This may be angelic hosts (cf. (Matt. 13:40-42; 16:27; 24:30-31; 25:31-32; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; 2 Thess. 1:7; Jude 14-15) or perhaps a picture of the victorious saints (cf. 3:4-5; 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13-14; 17:14).
  + **Verses 15**– Several OT passages form the basis for the description of the Rider in this verse. Isa. 11:4 and 49:2 speak of the rod of the mouth of the Messianic figure. He judges and strikes down nations with His word (cf. Jn. 12:48; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16).
  + Another OT passage is Psa. 2:9-12 (particularly v. 9) which speaks of the Messianic figure shattering the “kings of the earth” (Psa. 2:1-3). He is the one who is in charge and who rules with a rod of iron (cf. 12:5).
  + Finally, Isa. 63:1-6 and Joel 3:12-14 are alluded to as the Rider is said to be the one who will tread the winepress of the wrath of God, the Almighty (cf. 14:17-20). There is no shape, fashion or form in which the enemies of God can escape His wrath.
  + **Verse 16**– The Rider is further described as the “King of kings and Lord of lords” which echoes a previous sentiment in Rev. 17:14. This description is taken from a couple of OT passages (Deut. 10:17; Dan. 2:47) and it galvanizes everything that has been said about the Rider.
  + He is completely in control and completely overwhelming in terms of His authority and power which one can even begin to fathom (cf. 1 Tim. 6:15). The name is placed on locations where it is very visible but also locations that deal with swearing an oath (cf. Gen. 24:2, 9; 47:29).
  + **Verses 17-18**– An angel stands in the sun (position of splendor, importance, visibility) loudly announcing to the birds in midheaven to assemble for a “supper” in which they will consume the flesh of all the earthly rulers and military leaders/fighters that gather to war against God (cf. 16:12-16).
  + This is intended to be a parody of the marriage supper of the Lamb. God’s enemies do not get to partake of His supper but they themselves become supper to be consumed. The imagery is largely derived from the prophecy concerning Gog and Magog in Ezek. 38-39.
  + In Ezek. 39 especially, God intends to make known His name by slaughtering the enemies of His people (39:7, 21-25). The birds consuming the flesh is specially from Ezek. 39:17-20 though vv. 8-20 encompass the judgment of these earthly rulers and military personnel.
  + The imagery of birds or wild beasts consuming the flesh of those who reject God and stand against Him is well established in the OT (Deut. 28:26; 1 Sam. 17:44, 46; Psa. 79:1-3; Isa. 56:9; Jer. 7:33; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; Ezek. 29:5).
  + **Verse 19**– Explicit effort is made to take us back to the scene of Rev. 16:13-16. The scene intends to provide the conclusion to what began in chapter 16. The scene seems to be preparing us for a climactic battle.
  + **Verse 20**– The anticipated climactic seen is actually anti-climactic. There is no battle. The sea beast (beast) and land beast (false prophet) from chapter 13 are judged and thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (cf. Gen. 19:24-28; Ezek. 38:22; Rev. 14:10-11).
  + The talk of this lake of fire is probably a hybrid feature derived from passages like Gen. 19 and Ezek. 38. However, Daniel 7:9-11 seems to be the most used passage in terms of describing the punishment of the beast and false prophet here. The description is use by Jesus to speak of Hell (cf. Matt. 25:41; Mk. 9:43-48)
  + **Verse 21**– The rejection of God’s laws and principles is a death sentence to those who follow the beast. Punishment is handed down and the birds consume the flesh of these who have persecuted God’s people and blasphemed His holy name.