

A Wedding and a War

Revelation 19

In pouring out His wrath contained in the seven bowls mixed with the seven last plagues, God was unapproachable. No one could enter the holy place of the temple in heaven. In this chapter, there are two amazing and long awaited events that take place. It is a time of celebration and then conflagration. Planet Babylon has been ravaged by the wages of sin unleashed in the seven seals, the warnings of seven trumpet judgments and then by the holy wrath of God.

All of these things took place with the vast majority of heaven looking on, but now the time has come for them to begin participating. What is their reaction?

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" The wretched planet yet remains and the devil

with his unholy counterpoint trinity are still defiant. But here is the Lord's wedding gift to His spouse. It is spoken of in the past tense for most of it is done. There remains one final battle before the millennial reign of Jesus – we'll get to that momentarily.

First, make sure you've got your robe -- we've got a wedding to get to!

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" Worship of God is spontaneous for the twenty-four and four. It is followed by an invitation to all God's servants and a command to all who fear Him. Where are those who fear Him? I suggest that they are on earth. They are the Hebrew remnant in hiding. Who are they in heaven who do not serve our Lord? No one, of course. Do you suppose that they serve out of fear? Certainly, they have an ever enlightening awe of Him, but fear only entered into the relationship of God and His creation by way of sin. We saw that demonstrated in the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve first sinned. There is no sin in heaven; it has been confined to Babylon. The remnant of Israel, who are still in the flesh must yet deal with the sin nature of man and thus fearing God is right and good. However, I submit the

heavenly hosts serve God in ever growing love and admiration.

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." The halls of heaven are thundering with praises at the invitation to do so. Our Lord God is Omnipotent – all powerful. We sometimes wonder about this here on Babylon when the trials and personal tribulations seem to overwhelm us. But God has always been and is and always will be omnipotent. He is also all knowing and all present. Only in heaven will this begin to sink in for us.

That's probably part of what we'll be doing in heaven during the time of the tribulation. Our questions getting answered, our anticipations realized, our fears dispelled, our minds filled with awe – I suspect that this will be part of our preparation as the Bride of Christ.

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Note that her garments are "granted" – they weren't earned nor are they any kind of entitlement. They are a gift. And still they are her righteous acts. This is the epitome of grace, isn't it? You can

see that her wedding gown is clean and bright.

Yet you know you've blown it down below; you've been so dirty down in Babylon. You've truly given your heart to Christ and believed unto salvation. You've washed and washed and washed in the Word of God as you should have. But here, and only here in heaven, you discover and truly realize that every righteous thing you ever did was a gift from God.

And notice that her garment is the righteous acts of the saints. It's not just you, it's the righteous deeds of everyone saved by grace. Here, you thought your garment was all up to you. Though we know the rewards in heaven are individualized, in a wonderful somewhat mysterious way, the covering of the bride is the result of God's graciousness to all His saints. It's by the blood of Christ shed for all.

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" Who are called? Jesus spoke of this in one of His parables. He spoke of a wedding a king had prepared for his son. He invited many but the ones he invited were not willing to come. In fact, some ignored the invitation and others "seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them". The king was furious and destroyed the murderers. He said, "Those who were invited were not worthy." So he then sent his servants out to invite as many as

they could find and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called but few are chosen. (Mat 22)

Those who were invited were the Jews of old. The 144,000 anointed Hebrews of chapter seven are probably the group of servants God sent out afterward to invite as many as they could find. You might think of them as the church but the church is the Bride and then the Wife of Christ. And though the wedding hall was filled, it was absolutely necessary for everyone to have the proper garment – a robe of Christ's righteousness. Now the wedding was first, then came the wedding feast. Notice that we never see a wedding ceremony. Why is that? I'll suggest that at this point it has already happened – you see, Jesus pronounced, "I do" to His Bride before His Father on the cross of Calvary. What greater eternal commitment could He make? And in response, each time a new believer says, "I do" by accepting Jesus Christ into his/her heart as Savior and Lord, the wedding ceremony is more complete. At this point, the church

is complete, thus the weddings are finished. Our text says that the "marriage has come" and the verb tense indicates it's complete. Notice also that the Bride is now referred to as the Wife.

In church gatherings throughout the world and throughout the age, many people are present and often times witness to the ceremony in which new members of the Bride say, "I do" and yet they themselves never make that commitment. They think that by just attending the ceremony so to speak that they are "in". God has allowed everyone to attend the wedding ceremonies including the fakers, but they will be culled out and only the righteous will be called to the marriage supper that follows.

And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." John the apostle is aghast and the angel who has shown him all these things knows it. We should note that he did not have to assure John of the verity of what he'd shown him until this point. Why?

It was much easier for John to accept the majesty of Christ, the judgment on a sin filled world and all myriad aspects of the heavenly revelation up till this point. But this – the Bride of Christ, the wedding feast – that's just too good, too fantastic, too joyful, too, too, too much for him. He needs reassurance. Having gotten that...

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that

you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Two things are important for us here – first, is John's mistake. He's worshipping his guide, and he's corrected for it. Now, John was a good Jewish boy so to speak and an aged apostle. There's no way he's going to knowingly make a mistake like that, but down he goes. Why? I'm convinced that this guide who identifies himself as one of John's brethren – that is, a believer who went to heaven before John – looks so much like Jesus that John is honestly confused. He thinks this is Jesus.

And that's consistent with scripture for the Bible tells us of a wonderful transformation that will take place. Paul wrote:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom 8:28,29)

We're all going to look a lot like Jesus. Hallelujah!

Next, this Christ-like brother tells John that he must worship God because the "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy". A testimony is what someone says and how they live. And remember, this book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Fundamentally, it is all Jesus speaking.

"Spirit" is equally "breath" and "prophecy" is basically "the speaking forth of truth". So in this, John is being doubly assured that what he has just witnessed is indeed absolutely true for every word and act of Jesus is the breath of truth. And that's why God deserves his worship. Recall, Jesus said, "I am the way, the **truth** and the life." And just in case there's any question remaining in John's mind about it, Jesus will next present Himself with a name that confirms it...

*Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called **Faithful and True**, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.* Unlike the rider on a white horse who was sent out when the first seal was opened in chapter six, this Rider is Faithful and True. This is obviously Jesus.

The antichrist went forth on a white horse to deceive and conquer in wicked rebellion to God and to establish worldwide Babylon. As such, he is the counterpoint and 180 degrees opposite in motive and results to Christ.

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. How many times had John looked into those eyes and seen pure love and gentle kindness. But this is Christ going to war. And on His

head are diadems, crowns of royalty, not the crown of achievement. There are many of them because He is King of kings. We don't know where His name is written and we don't know what it is. The reason that's significant is that knowing a person's name gives you a type of power over that person. Call out to your friend, "Hey, Joe! Or, "Hey, Sam!" and watch his head turn (providing his name is Joe or Sam.) This understanding was more pronounced in the Middle East. What this is saying is that no one has any authority over Jesus in this matter – He is absolutely in charge. No one can turn His attention from this invasion.

He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. Keep in mind that this scene is still in heaven. He's about to go out. For that reason, I'm confident that this blood is His own. He Himself is among those whose blood the whore had shed. His blood is what made the garment of His Bride pure and bright. His blood is what has filled heaven with undeserving saints, saved by grace. His blood is why there are armies in heaven ready to follow Him. He is the Word of God.

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Here is the fulfillment of Enoch's prophecy which Jude recorded:

Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 14,15)

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Here is the Messiah that the Hebrews had always looked for. They should have recognized Jesus when He came as a Lamb – their law and sacrifices had portrayed the Savior as such for many hundreds of years – but they did not. They wanted a Lion and here He is on His way to Armageddon. This is the conquering Son of God and His name is clearly written right where everyone He smites can see it -- KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of

all people, free and slave, both small and great." Centered in the area of Megiddo, the war will cover the entire land of Israel, north to south with blood. Guess whose? Birds of carrion have always haunted battlefields and here they will gather en mass by special invitation. I have seen dozens of vultures circle a dying animal and they have a huge appetite.

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. You have to wonder who in their right mind would try to fight God in war. But these people are not sane. They are all either demon possessed or so deluded by the beast and false prophet that they are no longer even rational. The AC may have even convinced them that Christ and His army are alien invaders.

Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. Death is too good for the two who are captured. They are cast alive into the lake of fire. This is perdition, a place of eternal torment. Jesus spoke of

this when He told His disciples to fear God Who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Forever, the antichrist and the false prophet will be in torment, both body and soul. The rest are mercifully killed and will be judged later at the Great White Throne.

There's one more person of the evil anti-trinity to deal with and that's coming.