

# The Book Of Revelation

*3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy,  
and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.  
(Revelation 1:3. NRSV)*

*5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.'  
Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'  
(Revelation 21:5. NRSV)*

## Message 13

**Revelation 19**  
**February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012**  
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### Introduction:

Good evening! Tonight we continue looking at the 6<sup>th</sup> vision in the Book of Revelation which began in chapter 17:1. Last week we looked at the Fall of Babylon and this week we look at the triumph of Christ over the rest of his enemies. You recall that the Whore does not last as long as the Beast because the Beast turns on her and kills her. Thus her fall is described first. Now we see the total triumph of Christ over the remainder of his enemies. Most scholars agree that everything from 17:1-20:15 should be viewed together as a vision, or series of visions declaring the ultimate triumph of Christ with chapters 21-22 then representing the final vision of the eternal kingdom. However, because of the complexity of chapter 20 and the fact that it is the place where several good Evangelical theologians diverge from one another, we will give it a week to itself as we study it in next week.

Our plan for tonight is to read verses 1-10 of chapter 19 first because they form the counterpart to the fall of the whore. We spoke last week about the many dualities in the Book of Revelation; there are two cities, two animals, two marks and TWO WOMEN. Chapters 17-18 tell the story of the fall and disgrace of the whore and 19:1-10 provides the counterpart by showing us the elevation and honouring of the WOMAN, the BRIDE. It also introduces a final and very gruesome duality, the tale of two suppers. We see the wedding supper of the lamb, and then later in the chapter we have the supper of God to which are invited the birds of the air to feast upon the

carcasses of fallen sinners. So we will read this section, make just a few comments and then we will proceed to the vision of Armageddon and the Second Coming. Open your Bibles to Revelation 19:1:

<sup>1</sup>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!

<sup>2</sup>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."

<sup>3</sup>Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

<sup>4</sup>And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"

<sup>5</sup>Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

<sup>6</sup>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!

<sup>7</sup>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."

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

<sup>10</sup>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." (Revelation 19:1-10. NKJV)

Again we recall that the story of the fall of Babylon, the disgrace and collapse of the Whore takes place in the time of the bowls – the very end. The Great Tribulation, indeed all of human history since the Ascension of Christ has served God's twin purposes of wrath and redemption and we see these purposes beginning to come to an end. We see those who have despised the truth and embraced the seductions of the whore laid low. The whore has been stripped and humiliated and cast down. No more will she seduce men with her luxuries and her allurements. Babylon – seductive world culture and civilisation has fallen and heaven rejoices. The counterpart to that is that these same events have resulted in the purification and adornment of the Bride. She has been prepared and made ready for everlasting intimacy with the Lord. She has washed her robes in the blood of the lamb coming out of the time of Great Tribulation. Do you recall we read that back in chapter 7 about the whole people of God?

So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14. NKJV)

These same times result in collapse and ruin and disgrace for some and elevation, honouring and establishment for others. That's the counterpart. This story forms as a bit of a bridge between

the ruin of the whore and the judgment of the remaining enemies of God that are dealt with in 19 and 20. The duality of the feast we will deal with when we meet it in verse 17.

Before we begin addressing the second half of the chapter I want to provide a sense of its relationship to that which we've already seen. (Display chart). In the same way that the vision of the whore of Babylon can be seen to crash to its end in the time of the bowls, so too this vision of the Last Great Battle and the Second Coming can be said to take place in that same time period. In fact Beasley Murray goes so far as to say that what we are seeing in this next vision is really an extended telling of the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> bowl. The sixth bowl, you will recall, involves the Euphrates River drying up and demon spirits agitating and deceiving the leaders of the earth and summoning all the major nations into one meeting place where the wrath of God will fall on them collectively. This vision then, is the extended telling of that.

Before we read the account of that last battle and the Second Coming I think we would be well served to read the antecedent OT accounts first. As we have often said over the course of this class, these images are painted in colours borrowed from Old Testament canvases and so it is here. The critical passages are Daniel 2, Isaiah 63 and Zechariah 14. Let's read some selections from those passages so that we are well equipped to make sense of Revelation 19. Let's start with Daniel 2.

“You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor *was* excellent, stood before you; and its form *was* awesome.

<sup>32</sup>This image's head *was* of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

<sup>33</sup>its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

<sup>34</sup>You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

<sup>35</sup>Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:31-35. NKJV)

So the king had a dream and it seems he couldn't remember it but it troubled him greatly. He demanded that someone come to him and tell him the dream and then interpret – a pretty tall order! Only Daniel could do it. He tells him the dream. It was a dream of world empires that ultimately are all shattered and brought to an end by a stone from heaven that sets up an eternal kingdom. Daniel gives this interpretation in verses 36ff:

<sup>36</sup>This *is* the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.

<sup>37</sup>You, O king, *are* a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory;

<sup>38</sup>and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given *them* into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you *are* this head of gold.

<sup>39</sup>But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

<sup>40</sup>And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others.

<sup>41</sup>Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

<sup>42</sup>And *as* the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.

<sup>43</sup>As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

<sup>44</sup>And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

<sup>45</sup>Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” (Daniel 2:36-45. NKJV)

So Daniel says that the coming of the kingdom of God will be a SHATTERING COMING. It will come and fall upon the kingdoms of the earth in a CATASTROPHIC WAY and in the dust of that shattering coming will arise an eternal kingdom. Now there are a thousand things we could say about this but we don't have time in this context. One thing we will say is that Daniel predicts this will happen during the time of the mixed toes of the fourth empire. The fourth empire has almost always been understood as Rome. The head was Babylon, the chest was Medo-Persia, the belly was Greece and the legs are Rome. They are iron. They shatter and they are strong. This is why the Jews were expecting the Messiah in the time of Jesus, they knew they were in the time of Rome. This is why they expected the Messiah's coming to be a SHATTERING COMING. This is why John the Baptist when he saw Jesus coming into the world said: “The axe is lying at the root of the tree. REPENT! For the kingdom of God is at hand!!” This is why John the Baptist became very confused when Jesus went around preaching, resisting kingship, healing the sick and bringing the Gospel to the poor. That was not the shattering that he was looking for. This is the mystery of the two comings. Because of the mercy of God who desires that none should repent Jesus comes first as a lamb to offer himself as a sacrifice, he comes to give the truth and the Spirit of Truth to prepare people for the shattering coming that was predicted and that yet must still come. But Rome is long dead. So what do we make of this? This is why many people think that the final persecuting kingdom may be a revived Roman Empire. It was, is not and yet shall arise. How many toes are there are on two feet of clay mixed with iron? 10. How many horns did the last beast have? 10. How many

kings gave their power to the beast? 10. Where did the rock from heaven strike? On the feet of iron and clay. All that to say, there is a SHATTERING yet to come. Christ came first as a humble preacher on a donkey, he comes next as a shattering Warrior upon a White Horse.

The second OT passage we need to see is Isaiah 63:1-6:

‘Who is this that comes from Edom,  
from Bozrah in garments stained crimson?  
Who is this so splendidly robed,  
marching in his great might?’  
‘It is I, announcing vindication,  
mighty to save.’  
<sup>2</sup> ‘Why are your robes red,  
and your garments like theirs who tread the wine press?’  
<sup>3</sup> ‘I have trodden the wine press alone,  
and from the peoples no one was with me;  
I trod them in my anger  
and trampled them in my wrath;  
their juice spattered on my garments,  
and stained all my robes.  
<sup>4</sup> For the day of vengeance was in my heart,  
and the year for my redeeming work had come.  
<sup>5</sup> I looked, but there was no helper;  
I stared, but there was no one to sustain me;  
so my own arm brought me victory,  
and my wrath sustained me.  
<sup>6</sup> I trampled down peoples in my anger,  
I crushed them in my wrath,  
and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.’ (Isaiah 63:1-6. NRSV)

This figure of a marching warrior covered in blood from his conquests, trampling down the wine press, achieving uncontested victory is picked up wholesale in the account in Revelation 19.

Finally, we will look at Zechariah 14. We won’t have time to read all of it but let me read you the highlights:

For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle.

<sup>4</sup> And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, *making* a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. ... Thus the LORD my God will come, *and* all the saints with You....

<sup>9</sup> And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— “The LORD *is* one,” and His name one....

<sup>12</sup>And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

<sup>13</sup> It shall come to pass in that day *that* a great panic from the LORD will be among them. everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and raise his hand against his neighbor's hand;....

<sup>15</sup> Such also shall be the plague on the horse *and* the mule, on the camel and the donkey, and on all the cattle that will be in those camps. So *shall* this plague *be*.

<sup>16</sup>And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. (Zechariah 14:2-16. NKJV)

So again we have this picture of the nations of the world gathered for battle, intent on destroying the people of God but the Lord shows up, dressed for battle, with his holy ones with him and he utterly destroys the enemies, by means of plague and panic he triumphs over them and delivers his people and there begins the eternal reign of the Kingdom of God. Now it is worth noting that in the OT, here and also in Joel 3, Jerusalem is the setting for the last great battle, but we tend to call it Armageddon, as though it takes place in the valley of Megiddo. Why is that? Well, if you've been to Israel you realise that it is a very small place and the two sites are in fact not that far apart and if we read our Bibles very carefully, it does not say explicitly that the final battle will be at Megiddo. Let's very quickly revisit Revelation 16:12-16 the SIXTH BOWL where it says:

<sup>12</sup>Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. <sup>13</sup>And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup>For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. <sup>15</sup>“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” <sup>16</sup>And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. (Revelation 16:12-16. NKJV)

It actually just says that the staging ground is at Megiddo; it doesn't say where the battle is. So it may well be that the armies of the world will meet in Megiddo, stage there and then fight the final, determinative battle down the road at Jerusalem. Similarly, we remember that in the figurative sense, Jerusalem may mean to stand for the people of God and thus they are surrounded on all sides by enemies from the four corners of the earth when God shows up to decisively judge. Alright, those are the critical background texts, try to keep those stored in your minds as we read Revelation 19:11-21:

<sup>11</sup>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.

It is worth noting that whereas in Revelation 4:1 we have a door or window in heaven opening now we have ALL OF HEAVEN OPENING; this is a way of saying that this is the final, full,

BIG disclosure. There is a constant movement from partial to full, from warning to judgment, from wide to narrow in focus and we this continuing here. That he is on a white horse means that he does not come as the Peaceful Preacher, as he did once coming to Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey, now by way of contrast, he comes riding a White War Horse. White is the colour of CONQUEST and VICTORY. He is given titles belonging to God and he comes to judge and make war. The first coming was a coming of grace, this is a coming of wrath. This is the shattering that was foretold in Daniel and it falls in the days of the ten horns or toes.

<sup>12</sup>His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He <sup>4</sup>had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

That his eyes were like a flame of fire means that he sees through all of the deceptions straight to the heart of the matter. The beast had his ten crowns and the dragon his seven but the Warrior on the White Horse has too many to count. And he has a name that no one knew but himself. This is a way of saying that no one has power over him and there are depths of his person that no one can plumb. We who are believers have an intimate relationship with Jesus but nowhere in the Bible is it said that we fully know God. Paul wants to know him, John looks forward to knowing him fully, but no one claims to know Christ fully in the Bible. It is enough that we are known fully by him.

<sup>13</sup>He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

This robe dipped or stained in blood is taken directly from Isaiah 63. You recall it says:

<sup>2</sup> ‘Why are your robes red,  
and your garments like theirs who tread the wine press?’

<sup>3</sup> ‘I have trodden the wine press alone,  
and from the peoples no one was with me;

I trod them in my anger  
and trampled them in my wrath;  
their juice spattered on my garments,  
and stained all my robes.

<sup>4</sup> For the day of vengeance was in my heart,  
and the year for my redeeming work had come. (Isaiah 63:2-4. NRSV)

As he rides along he seems to accumulate Divine Titles as indeed reminds us of Zechariah 14. Now he is called The Word of God a title John remembers from the first chapter of his Gospel.

<sup>14</sup>And the armies in heaven, clothed in <sup>f</sup>fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

This line is borrowed directly from Zechariah 14 and is understood by most commentators to refer to angels. They carry no weapons and wear no armour because they are not allies of the Warrior, they are witnesses only. As we recall from Isaiah 63 he does this work of wrath alone. He needs no help and has no help.

<sup>15</sup>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.

This bit of imagery is taken from Isaiah 11. It means that all the peoples gathered there against him are judged and slain by his Word. Note well that it is ultimately our adherence to the Word of God that determines whether we are considered allies or enemies of the Lord Jesus. Note that there is also no great description of this Last Battle. They assembled, Jesus went forth and they were judged and slaughtered by the Word of his Mouth. Again, you must recall OT antecedents in Zechariah. There it says:

<sup>12</sup>And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths. (Zechariah 14:12. NKJV)

2 Thessalonians 2 says:

<sup>8</sup>And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8. NKJV)

So then, this is no protracted battle. It is over as it begins.

<sup>16</sup>And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

The Divine titles continue to accumulate as the Warrior is revealed as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

<sup>17</sup>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,

<sup>18</sup>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."

Here the duality of feasts is completed. We saw the Wedding Supper of the Lamb in the first part of the chapter and now we have the gruesome Supper of the Great God. An angel high in the sky, in the midst of the sun, summons all the birds of the air to come and feast on the dead bodies



of those who had gathered for the last great battle. The imagery for this is borrowed from Ezekiel 39. This is not the battle with Gog and Magog, but the same imagery of feasting and birds gorging themselves on the dead is here used.

<sup>19</sup>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.

<sup>20</sup>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.

Again, the battle is not described at length, it is merely said that people gathered together, they marched, he marched and WHAM! It was over and it is now time to divvy up the spoils and deal with the captives. In chapter 17-18 we saw the fall of the whore, now we see the fall of the beast – God hating, God opposing government and also the false prophet who worked counterfeit wonders to deceive people into worshipping the beast – false science, false religion, godless materialist philosophy. It all collapses, is judged and cast down. System and incarnation – government and anti-Christ, religion and prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire.

<sup>21</sup>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. (Revelation 19:11-21. NKJV)

The rest are generally understood as the rest of those gathered to make war, not necessarily the rest of the people on the earth. Most of the passages that deal with the last battle and introduce the eternal Messianic Kingdom then move on to a description of iron righteous rule, as indeed this one does, so the assumption is that there are people left on the earth at this time who are not cast into the Lake of Fire. We won't take questions on that little issue this week because it is caught up in the issue of how you understand the Millennium which is the focus of our conversation next week. All of that to say, JESUS WINS. That's really the point of this chapter. The times ahead are going to be very difficult. God will complete his twin purposes of wrath and redemption and they will be very difficult days, so difficult that had they not been shortened for the sake of the elect, none would survive. But. God shows up and the end and he WINS. Jesus destroys his enemies by the breath of his mouth and he establishes his eternal rule and those who have persevered in faith, enduring to the end shall reign with him forever, eternity without end. This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Let's end there and take some questions in the time we have left.