

## Revelation 19:1-10 | The Marriage Banquet Of The Lamb

### Introduction

In chapters 17 and 18 we saw the destruction of the wicked world's system typified in the city Babylon, now in chapter 19, the attention turns to the great wedding feast as the inaugural event of the millennial kingdom. This chapter can be divided into three sections: vv. 1-5 rejoicing at the judgment of the great prostitute (Babylon); vv. 6-10 rejoicing at the marriage supper of the Lamb; and vv. 11-21 the return of Christ.

The big ideas in this chapter are clear, but numerous details remain disputed by interpreters.

### Verse-By-Verse Notes

#### Verses 1-3

- Heaven rejoices see the righteous vindicated through God's judgment on Babylon. This passage contains two of four "Hallelujahs" in chapter 19. "Hallelujah" is transliterated from Hebrew **הַלְלֵי יְהוָה** *ha-lal* (praise) and **יְהוָה** *Yah* (the shortened form of *Yahweh*). It means "praise Yahweh"). The only New Testament occurrences of it are here in Revelation 19.
- The judgments of God are *true and just* – there is no unfairness in God. When the righteous behold the final judgment of God on the wicked, it will be cause to rejoice.

#### Verses 4-5

- The twenty-four elders (possibly representing the 12 tribes and 12 Apostles or some exalted angelic order) and the four living creatures (the guardians of God's throne – ch. 4:4-6) will fall in worship at the judgments of God. Verse 4 contains the third "hallelujah" in this chapter (and in the New Testament as a whole).
- Verse 5 represents a universal call to join in praise of the judgments of God on the wicked.

#### Verse 6

- John hears the voice of all of heaven erupt with the fourth "hallelujah" in Revelation 19 (and the last in the New Testament).
- The praise of heaven centers around the sovereignty (*the Lord*), immanence (*our God*), and omnipotence (*the Almighty*) of God.
- The term "reigns" is an inceptive aorist verb meaning a focus on the *beginning of an action*. In other words, the phrase can be translated "the Lord our God the Almighty *has begun* to reign." What is the significance of this?
  - o It points to the "already-not-yet" dimension of the reign of God. He reigns *already* (now/presently), but *not yet* in eschatological *fullness*.
  - o The inceptive aorist emphasizes that the destruction of Babylon and the marriage supper of the Lamb represent the inauguration of the eschatological

reign of God in the millennial kingdom. This has important implications in recognizing the millennium as a *literal* period of Christ's *physical* reign on earth.

### Verse 7

- The marriage of the Lamb is depicted as an event of great rejoicing.
- The "Bride" should be understood as the redeemed. Some interpreters limit the identity of the Bride to the *church*, but God's people throughout redemptive history have been referred to as His bride (see Isaiah 54:5-6; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:16-20).
- Robert Mounce: The metaphor of marriage as expressing the relationship between God and his people has its roots in the prophetic literature of the OT. . . . The same symbolism runs throughout the NT."
- The phrase "the Bride has made herself ready" recalls the nature of biblical weddings that took place in two parts: the betrothal and the wedding. The betrothal and wedding were separated by a period of time while the bridegroom prepared a home for his bride. The bride would likewise "make herself ready" and wait expectedly for the return of her bridegroom (see John 14:1-4).

### Verse 8

- There is an important interpretive consideration here: was the Bride given *garments* to wear or was she given the *privilege* of wearing those garments? The latter seems to fit the context best as the rest of the verse states that the "fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints."
- If the Bride's garments are the "righteous deeds of the saints," what does this mean for the doctrine of justification by faith alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ? Is there an implication of works-righteousness the garments of the Bride?
- This brings us once again to the connection between works and faith. See Ephesians 2:10; 5:25-26; Philippians 2:12-13. In the final analysis, there is no tension between the Bride's garments being the "righteous deeds of the saints" and the reality that all that is good in us is produced solely by Christ through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.
- Jim Hamilton: This passage is here so that by the Spirit in faith we will walk in "righteous deeds" that will shine like fine linen on that day."
- That the Bride's righteous deeds are produced in her by God's empowering grace is a picture of Ephesians 4:24, in which the believer "puts on the new self" which is "created [by God] in true righteousness and holiness."

### Verse 9

- Another interpretive issue surfaces in this verse: *who are the guests invited to the banquet?*

- Almost all Dispensational interpreters say they are OT saints (pre-Pentecost), tribulation saints, and Israel. John MacArthur takes this view.
- Other interpreters view the Bride and the guests as two descriptions of the same group. I favor this view as the dispensational view seems to read things into the text that just aren't there. The phrase "those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" seems to be viewing the Bride as both a single entity *and* as the individuals that comprise that entity.
- Alan Johnson: "Here in Revelation the wedding is the beginning of the earthly kingdom of God, the bride is the church in all her purity, and the invited guests are both the bride and people who have committed themselves to Jesus."  
Mounce: "Here in vv. 7-9 the church is pictured both as bride and as the guests are who invited to the wedding. Far from constituting a contradiction, this sort of freedom is a normal characteristic of apocalyptic writing."

### **Verse 10**

- In overwhelming awe at what he has just heard, John falls before the angel in worship, but the angel refuses John's worship as worship belongs to God alone.
- The phrase "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" likely indicates that Christ is the center-focus of the prophetic word.

### **Other Common Interpretive Questions Regarding The Wedding Of The Lamb:**

1. *When does it take place?* Context indicates at the start of the millennium, though some assert that it takes place in heaven during the Tribulation period.
2. *Where does it take place?* We aren't told in Scripture, but some interpretive views necessitate it being in heaven (see #2 above).
3. *How long does it last?* We aren't told in Scripture. Some assert it lasts for the duration of the millennium. (MacArthur & Jeremiah hold this view) Others believe it is not so much an *event* as a *symbol* of the joy of the relationship between Christ and His people.  
J. R. Yeatts: "Although the marriage supper seems to be an eschatological banquet after the forces of evil are defeated and Christ's kingdom established (Matt. 8:11), the actual marriage supper of the Lamb is nowhere described. Therefore, it is likely not an event but a symbol of the joyful, intimate, and indissoluble fellowship between Christ and the faithful. The faithful saint awaits the parousia in the same way as a pure betrothed bride anticipates her wedding."
4. *A final interesting observation*: some commentators view the Lord's Supper as a prefiguring of the marriage supper of the Lamb. I found this interesting as it certainly casts the Lord's Supper in new light.

**BIG IDEA: THE UNION OF CHRIST AND THOSE HE REDEEMED SHOULD SPUR US ON TO RIGHTEOUS LIVING IN ANTICIPATION OF THAT GREAT BANQUET.**