

THE VICTORY OF THE LAMB OVER THE BEAST

Easter Sunday - The Victory of the Lamb, part 13: Revelation 19

Stonebrook Sunday AM, 4/9/23, Matt Heerema

Please turn with me to Revelation chapter 19.

Today is Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, and it might seem a little strange that our text for the morning is Revelation 19. But we made the decision not to take time out of this important series for this week, but rather, we worked to schedule the series so that chapter 19 fell on this morning, because in our chapter today, we get to see a powerful image of the risen Jesus, and the result of his work on the cross: the salvation of His people, and the defeat of the beast!

An unfortunate chapter break

Revelation 19 is one of the more unfortunate chapter breaks in the book of Revelation. These breaks were not written in by John, the original author, they were added many many years later by monks in order to aid research by making passages easy to find and refer to in other writing. But sometimes they get in the way of understanding meaning. The first part of chapter 19 really belongs with chapter 18, and the second part goes much better with most of 20. But that's okay for today.

And as we turn to chapter 19 today, the scene turns to...

A HEAVENLY WORSHIP SERVICE

Revelation 19:1-8 (CSB)

- 1 After this I heard something like the loud voice of a vast multitude in heaven, saying,
Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God,
2 because his judgments are true and righteous,
because he has judged the notorious prostitute
who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality;
and he has avenged the blood of his servants that was on her hands.
- 3 A second time they said,
Hallelujah! Her smoke ascends forever and ever!
- 4 Then the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures
fell down and worshiped God, who is seated on the throne, saying,
Amen! Hallelujah!
- 5 A voice came from the throne, saying,

Praise our God, all his servants, and the ones who fear him, both small and great!
 6 Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude,
 like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying,
 Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty, reigns!
 7 Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory,
 because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself.
 8 She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure.
 For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.

Worship services in Revelation

This is the last of six worship services found in the book of revelation. We see the other five unfold like this, all from the throne room of heaven:

- 4:9-11—Who: creatures and elders—Why: Because He has created all things
- 5:9-14—Who: creatures, elders, and angels—Why: Because he died to redeem His people
- 7:10-12—Who: creatures, elders, angels, and redeemed saints—Why: Because He is saving his people throughout history
- 11:16-18—Who: elders—Why: Because he reigns over the whole world
- 15:3-4—Who: Redeemed saints—Why: Because his deeds are righteous (judgement and salvation)
- 19:1-8—Who: The vast multitude (creatures, elders, angels, redeemed saints)—Why: Because justice has been done, and the Lord is returning to His people

Why they are worshipping

- I. (19:1-5) - Praised for his righteous judgement on Babylon
 - A. His judgements are true and righteous
 - B. He has judged the notorious prostitute
 - C. He has avenged the blood of His servants
- II. (19:6-8) - Praise that The Lord God Almighty Reigns, and the marriage of the Lamb has come!
 - A. It is finally time for Jesus to be with his people forever!
 - B. The time we're all waiting for! Yes?!
 - C. "Blessed are those invited to the marriage feast!"
 1. This is the feast on mount Zion referred to in Isaiah 25
 - a) No more death
 - b) Tears wiped away
 2. This is the feast we look forward to every time we take communion "until he comes"

THERE IS ONLY ONE WHO IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP!

Revelation 19:9-10 (CSB)

9 Then he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb!" He also said to me, "These words of God are true." 10 Then I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers and sisters who hold firmly to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, because the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

John is so overcome by the magnificence of the moment, and the power and glory of the angel (probably the one mentioned in 17:1), that he falls down to worship, and the angel stops him. This shows us a really amazing truth (also mentioned in Hebrews), The angels are ministers *with us*! We play on the same team! That's pretty cool...

There's a strange phrase here at the end of verse 10: **"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"** - What the angel means is that it's Jesus's message that we're supposed to be focused on!

In all of our "God stories" and "sharing with people" and most especially maybe in our preaching, the thing we're supposed to be about is The Words About Jesus! The Revelation of Jesus (is how this book starts!).

The point is WHAT JESUS HAS DONE AND IS DOING, not what we're doing, not what angels are doing, not what is going to happen in future events: the point of Revelation is WHAT JESUS HAS DONE. We bear witness to Jesus, not to ourselves, not to the wonderful community of the church, not to the wonderful deeds the church is doing in the community, our message is about Jesus.

THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

I mentioned that awkward chapter break, here's where it should be. John begins another vignette, another scene. I know it's been a few weeks for us, but if you were reading this book realtime, you'd have not too long ago read chapter 13, where The Beasts are introduced. The Antichrist, the counterfeit Christ. And now we get to meet the real deal.

Having described the Dragon and his army, the beasts and all the people they deceive, John now describes the Lamb's army. Jesus's people. And he describes a clear picture of the final outcome

of this ongoing struggle, between the Lamb and the Dragon, the Beasts and God's people, in order to encourage the church throughout history.

Before we begin this next section, let me ask you a question.

Do you ever have a picture of or visualize Jesus as you pray to Him? What does He look like in your mind's eye?

John has given us several glimpses of him as He is now, starting in chapter 1.

Revelation 1:12-18 (CSB)

12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, dressed in a robe and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. 14 The hair of his head was white as wool—white as snow—and his eyes like a fiery flame. 15 His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of cascading waters. 16 He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, and his face was shining like the sun at full strength. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last, 18 and the Living One. I was dead, but look—I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades.

And again here. And what an amazing picture of Jesus we get to see! Are you ready? Let's read!

Revelation 19:11-16 (CSB)

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and with justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on his head. He had a name written that no one knows except himself. 13 He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. 14 The armies that were in heaven followed him on white horses, wearing pure white linen. 15 A sharp sword came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty. 16 And he has a name written on his robe and on his thigh: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Let's take a minute to soak these details in. Many of these details are in direct contrast with the beast from Revelation 13, emphasizing how much this beast is trying to counterfeit Christ.

- **Names:** Faithful and True, The Word of God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords
 - Contrast with the blasphemous names written on the beast

- **“with justice he judges and makes war”**
 - unlike the beast’s war against the saints
- **Many crowns** on his head
 - the beast only gets 10.
- **Robe is dipped in blood** (from the winepress: image from Isaiah 61 and Rev 14)
- **“Sharp, double edged sword** frm his mouth, He will strike the nations with it, he will rule them with a rod of iron...”
 - Strikes the nations: this sounds very forceful and violent, doesn’t it?
 - Especially when paired with “ruling with a rod of iron” -
 - Double edged sword: Hebrews 4:12 - the Word of God!
 - The striking the nations: preaching of the word bringing conviction and repentance and judgement.
 - Contrast with the beast uttering blasphemies and deceiving the nations.
 - He will *shepherd* them with a rod of iron.
 - The beast “exercises authority” - or “(ab)uses power”
 - The very thing we are nervous about when we hear about Christ ruling with a rod of iron, is what the beast does: abuses power. I think the wording is very important. Jesus shepherds, the beast abuses power.
- **Armies on white horses** and pure white linen = All Christians. Same image from 14:1

THE FATE OF THE BEASTS

Revelation 19:17-21 (CSB)

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he called out in a loud voice, saying to all the birds flying high overhead, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of military commanders, the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and of their riders, and the flesh of everyone, both free and slave, small and great.”

19 Then I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and against his army. 20 But the beast was taken prisoner, and along with it the false prophet, who had performed the signs in its presence. He deceived those who accepted the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image with these signs. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 The rest were killed with the sword that came from the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds ate their fill of their flesh.

- Announced: The supper of God (from Ezekiel 39) - the destiny of the beast

- Announcing the fate of the beast and all who side with him...
- An encouragement to the early church: We will win! The beast is doomed!
- The beast, the kings, and their armies, waging war against the Jesus and his army
 - How are they doing this? Persecution, oppression, mockery, but mostly: *unbelief*
- In the end: Beast and false prophet taken prisoner - no actual fighting!
- Thrown into the lake of fire - We'll get more into the lake of fire in the coming weeks, but it is essentially what we mean when we say hell - the place of eternal torment in judgement for the dragon, the beast, and all who have rejected Christ and do not follow him.
- The rest were killed with the sword from the rider's mouth.
- To be continued next week in chapter 20. Stick around.

APPLICATION

1. Rejoice that Jesus is alive, and is the powerful ruler of creation!
2. Take courage in your daily struggles, knowing your destiny is secure
3. For those that do not know this Jesus, this should be a frightening image. Turn and devote all of your whole life to this loving creator!