

THE BRIDE, THE BATTLE

Lesson 28

Wednesday, Dec 13, 2017

Text: Revelation 19:1-21

It is easy by this point in the book to get lost in the whirlwind of symbolism. Let's step back & look at the context to help us get our bearings:

- at the end of the 6th bowl of judgment, the call to the battle at Armageddon was given (16:14-16). We then saw the 7th bowl poured out, as the judgment of Rome is completed.
- we saw this judgment portrayed as a harlot on a beast (ch 17) – the seduction by Rome
- we then saw this judgment through the commercial downfall, with Rome portrayed as Babylon (ch 18)
- Now in ch 19, we see the victory of the church as a wedding feast, Christ as a warrior leading his army against Rome, and carnage of “dead bodies” after the judgment “battle”

19:1-5 Rejoicing over Judgment

1. *Why* is there rejoicing over the judgment of “Babylon” / the Harlot, and *who* is giving the praise? (Rev 19:1-5 & 18:20)

19:6-10 The bride & Wedding Feast



In Rev 19:6-10 the focus shifts from praise for judgment of the harlot / Babylon to praise for the marriage. (This begins to get us ready for the “bride” in ch’s 21-22!) Understanding this section requires understanding a little about Hebrew marriage customs. Eastern customs had 3 aspects that differ from our weddings.

(1) The Bride. She was considered the bride *before* the marriage supper (Deut 22:23-24, Mt 1:18-20.) It was so binding that if they decided NOT to follow through with the wedding, she could not marry another without a paper of divorce. During the betrothal, the groom pays a dowry to the father of the bride, and prepares for the wedding feast.

(2) Marriage supper. The betrothal was public, and the binding occurred *before* the marriage supper. On the day set, the groom in his best apparel and with his friends forms a procession to the bride’s home, receives her, and takes her to his home. (See the parable of Mt. 25:1-13.)

(3) Bride’s adornment. Her garment symbolized sanctity.

Who is the bride? In the Old Testament we see Israel shown as betrothed to God (Jer 2:2, 32, Is 50:1, 54:5-7, Hos 2.) Here the phrase “It was given to her” (Rev 19:8) implies that the bride was given the ability and responsibility to make proper preparation of purity. Contrast this to the attire of the harlot of chapter 17!

The final consummation of the marriage is yet to come — Rev 21-22. The bride — the church — is currently betrothed.

2. In Rev 21 we will see God’s people, with him eternally, portrayed as the bride of the Lamb. We see this same imagery elsewhere in the New Testament.
 - (a) Who is portrayed as Christ’s bride in Eph 5:22-27 & 1 Cor 11:2?
 - (b) What was the dowry paid? (Eph 5:25, Acts 20:18)

3. **A.** The bride is to be adorned in pure garments. From Rev 19:8, of what is this fine linen made?
- B.** Although the bride is the church (all saved), how is the pure garment actually produced? (Rev 19:8, Eph 5:26-27.) (i.e., what is your part in this?)

Why does John fall to worship the angel in 19:10? We don't know! This occurs again in 22:8. Perhaps this is given to show how subtle idolatry — worship of "Not God" — is. *What a message to those in the 1st century being asked to bow to Caesar as a god!*

19:11-16 The Rider on the White Horse



4. We see this rider has:
- eyes a flame of fire (Rev 1:14)
 - name is "The Word of God" (Jn 1:1-2, 14)
 - could lead the armies of heaven (Rev 5:6-14, Mt 26:53)
 - has a sharp two-edged sword from his mouth (Rev 1:16, 2:12,16; Heb 4:12 with Jn 12:48-49)
 - rules the nations with a rod of iron (Rev 2:27, 12:5, Isa 11:1-5)
 - has the name "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Rev 1:5, 17:14)
- Who is this rider?
5. In verse 12, we see that the rider is wearing "many crowns". These crowns are *diadem* crowns which show authority or rule. The dragon wore 7 crowns, the sea beast 10 – why is he wearing "many" crowns? (why not a specific number?)
6. This rider strikes down the nations with His word, the sword of his mouth.
- a. How does *this method* of striking the nations relate to the nature of his judging and waging war in 19:11?
 - b. How do vss 11 & 15 help us to understand the "harshness" of Rev 14:17-20, 14:8, 16:17-21, etc?
7. How does the clothing of his army (19:14) relate to the clothing of the bride (19:7-9)?
- So are we Christ's bride, or a warrior in his army?

19:17-21 The Battle

8. Verses 17-18 depict a preparation of the fowls of the air.
- a. For what purpose are they gathering? (Compare to Jeremiah 7:33-34, and 16:3-9)
 - b. The gathering of the birds occurs before the two armies even gather for battle. What does THAT tell us?

- 9.a.** Who is gathered together to make war (19:19)? (see also 16:13-16)
- b.** “Where” is this war? (see also 16:13-16)
- c.** Is this portraying a physical military battle with modern-day weapons, as some teach? (See also Jn 18:36 & Rev 1:1,3).
- 10.** The great Sea beast and the great Earth beast seemed unbeatable. These beasts seemed overpowering to faithful Christians who followed Christ’s instruction, refusing to give in to the beast’s way and receiving severe punishment in return. (See 13:13-17)
- a.** Do we see here a long, drawn-out battle that is closely contested? (19:19-21)
- b.** What is revealed about how the great battle ends?
- c.** Who are the “rest” that are killed by the sword in verse 21?

Verse 20 also speaks of the fiery lake of burning brimstone (sulfur). This represents complete destruction. Dan 7:10-11 also speaks of a fiery stream. The 4th beast was thrown into the fire there!

- 11.** *Much* issue is made in today’s religious world about this battle of Armageddon. Is there any focus in this passage on the *details* of this battle? What *IS* the focus of this battle description?