

BITTER HONEY: THE REVELATION

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CHAPTER 19: ROME JUDGED

Versus 1-10

Revelation 18 and 19 described Babylon's destruction. Revelation 18:20 commanded heaven, the saints, the prophets, and the apostles to rejoice over God's judgment. Revelation 18:21-24 were added as an aside to parallel Revelation 18 with Jeremiah 50 and 51. The first ten verses of Revelation 19 returned to the theme of Revelation 18:20 and continued with that thought. John heard a multitude in heaven saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God because His judgments are true and righteous. For He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immortality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." A second time, they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever." All this praise to God came because He had answered the prayers of His people. In Revelation 6:10, the period of mixed nations was characterized by martyrs praying, "How long, Oh Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then in Revelation 8:3, the prayers of the saints became incense which Christ cast on the earth. In Revelation 16:1, those prayers became bowls of wrath as they were answered by judgment. Finally in Revelation 19, the saints praised God for answering their prayers in judgment.

Revelation 19:7-9 spoke of Christ's marriage to His bride the church. God's people were clothed with fine linen which was Christ's righteousness imputed to His bride. John was told, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Those who stood in Christ's righteousness were blessed because Christ reigned over His kingdom. Christ's marriage came when He returned to claim His bride. The symbol of a bride came out of the Old Testament. Among other places, it was used in Isaiah 62:4 which claimed, "It will no longer be said, 'Desolate,' but you will be called, 'My delight is in her,' and your land, 'Married.' For the Lord delights in you, and He will be married to your land." Jesus used the symbol of a bride to describe His church in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). This parable stressed that Christ's return would be His wedding feast. Only those who waited faithfully would join Him in it.

In Revelation 19:10, John fell at the feet of the angel who had taught him these things, and John began to worship him. The angel said, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of you and your brothers who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The angel who was talking to John in this verse was not the Angel of the Lord from Revelation 1:1. He was the angel with a bowl of wrath from Revelation 17:1. This angel had been describing Babylon's fall through chapters 17-19. This angel was not Christ, and he would not accept worship. He did convey to John the "true words of God."

Verses 11-16

Christ's marriage would come when He returns in judgment. So the rest of Revelation 19 described Armageddon and the Lord's return. Revelation 16:14 had called Armageddon the "war of the great day of God." Armageddon would be not only a battle between men but also a battle between man and God. That is why Isaiah 31:4 promised that "the Lord of Hosts will come down to wage war on Mount Zion and on its hill." The rest of Revelation 19 would describe this battle. First, Revelation 19:11-16 described Christ and His armies coming to do battle against Rome. John saw heaven opened. He saw a white horse with a rider who was called Faithful and True. This horseman judged and waged war in righteousness. He can be identified as Christ for several reasons. Christ called Himself the faithful and true witness in Revelation 3:14, so the horseman was Faithful and True. The horseman had eyes like a flame of fire. Christ was described this way in Revelation 2:18. The horseman had many diadems on his head. These diadems were crowns representing authority. They show that He was the King of kings and Lord of lords. The horsemen

also had a name written on Him which no one knew but He Himself. This can be compared to Judges 13:18 where the Angel of the Lord told Samson's parents that His name was incomprehensible. God would give Christ a new name which only He knew. Christ promised to give His children the same kind of new name in Revelation 2:17.

Christ was clothed in a robe that was dipped in blood. His name was called the Word of God. This robe dipped in blood probably did not represent Christ's blood shed for the forgiveness of sins. This robe probably referred back to Isaiah 63:3 where Christ was said to have trod the winepress of God's wrath alone. God said, "I also trod them in My anger and trampled them in My wrath. Their life blood was sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all of My raiment." Christ's robe was dipped in blood because He was coming to slay men in judgment. The armies which followed Christ were dressed in linen. These armies were angels who were dressed in bright linen in Revelation 15:6. Christ had promised that He would send His angels to gather sinners from the world (Matthew 13:41), and His angels then would gather the redeemed (Matthew 24:31).

Verses 17-21

John saw an angel standing in the sun. This angel summoned the birds of heaven. It said, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God so that you may eat the flesh of kings, commanders, mighty men, horses, and those who sit on them, the flesh of men both slave and free, small and great." This summons came originally from Ezekiel 39:17-20. God told Ezekiel to speak to the birds and the beasts of the field. Ezekiel was told to say, "Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel so that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of princes of the earth as if they were rams. ... You will be gluttoned at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men, and with all the men of war."

Ezekiel and John were prophesying about Armageddon. After summoning the birds, John saw Rome, the earth's kings, and their armies assemble to battle Christ and His army. The Antichrist was seized with the false prophet. They were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burned with brimstone. If the battle at Megiddo climaxed in a nuclear exchange, the Antichrist and the false prophet could be thrown into hell alive. They would be killed by a kind of burning parallel to the burning that they would experience in hell forever. The Antichrist's followers were killed with the sword from Christ's mouth and the birds were filled with their flesh. These may have died from war, famine, disease, or perhaps even fall out. Unlike the armies of Armageddon they were not all burned because the birds ate their flesh. As Rome's armies were burned at Armageddon, fire would fall on their home lands (Ezekiel 39:6). Those who did not die from the explosions would perhaps die from radiation or other affects of the war. When Rome's armies lie dead in Israel's fields, man's power would be broken forever. Then Christ would return.