

# The Second Coming of Christ

## Lesson #11 Revelation 19:7-21

*"Let the heavens be glad, & let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, & all it contains; let the field exult, & all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the Lord, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness & the peoples in His faithfulness. Psalm 96:11-13"*

*"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; break forth & sing for joy & sing praises. Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre & the sound of melody. With trumpets & the sound of the horn shout joyfully before the King, the Lord. Let the sea roar & all it contains, the world & those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness & the peoples with equity. Ps.98:4-9"*

### I. The Marriage of the Lamb (19:7-10)

#### A. The Clothing for the Marriage (19:7,8)

**(19:7) Let us rejoice & be glad & give the glory to Him, -** The great multitude of 19:1 continue to praise the Lord. **for the marriage of the Lamb has come** - The immediate reason for this celebration is the fact that it is time for the Lamb's marriage to His bride the Church. That the bride is the Church seems clear from Eph.5:18-32 where Christian marriage is said to depict Christ's relationship to the Church (see verse 32 in particular). This is in preparation for the ruling structure of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev.2:26,27; 3:21). Note that the focus is on the Lamb, it is His wedding, He is the bridegroom (Jn.3:29). The best view of the timing of this event appears to be after the Rapture but prior to the Second Coming of Christ (19:11, see chart on page 6). The Church, having already been translated, are given new bodies, are rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ & now is collectively ready for the marriage ceremony just prior to the return of Christ to the earth. The chronology seems irresistible at this point. Note also that this would be the first reference to the Church since chapter 3 strongly indicating that the Church is not present in the Tribulation Period as delineated in Rev.6-19:6 **& His bride has made herself ready.** - The multitude is also rejoicing because the bride has made herself ready for the wedding. The bride is the Church which consists of believers from the day of Pentecost until Rapture (Jn.14:1-6; 2Cor.11:2; Eph.5:22-33; 1Thess.4:13-18). The Epistles portray the Church as an engaged virgin awaiting & being prepared for this wedding day (2Cor.11:2; Eph.5:25-27). Rev.19:1 locates this scene in the third heaven where the Church would have already received glorified bodies (1Cor.15:51-57) & their rewards as a result of the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom.14:10,12; 1Cor.3:10-17; 4:5; 2Cor.5:10). Note that the great multitude recognizes that the Church, which is His body, is distinct from others who are in heaven.

*"The unfounded notion that God treats all saints of all ages exactly alike is not a biblical concept. The fact that the divine purpose is not the same for Israel, the Gentile believers, or the church of the present age is plainly written in the Word of God. Each has its peculiar advantages & particular place in the divine program. Just as no two individuals have exactly the same destiny, so no two nations or groups in God's program are treated exactly alike. In all these relationships God is completely sovereign, righteous, & wise. John F. Walvoord, 'Revelation,' p.286, Revised"*

**(19:8) It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen,** - This is because the Church will have already passed through the Judgment Seat of Christ where all impurity has been burned off (1Cor.3:10-15) & the bride has been appropriately rewarded for those things done individually in faithfulness to the Lord. Of course the bride is made up of individual believers & every believer receives some reward from Christ (1Cor.4:5). Note that God graciously rewards the believer for works that He has pre-planned (Eph.2:10)

& that He has empowered the execution of (1Pet.4:11). **bright & clean;** - It is revealed in Eph.5:25-27 that the church has to be cleansed (purified) in order for this to be true,

*"Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church & gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy & blameless."*

We are anything but this in the current state of things but by the time we are presented to Him for marriage we will have been made into what we were intended to be.

*"Beloved, now we are children of God, & it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him just as He is. 1Jn.3:2"*

**for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.** - This is instructive, the bride is clothed for her wedding with the righteous acts that have been performed in faithfulness on behalf of the bridegroom. These would be exactly the same as the good works that have been pre-planned for us as taught in Eph.2:10 & which we are to walk in. See how important it is for us to be in a right fellowship with God now for only as we are in a right fellowship with God can we discover what those works are. Note that a good work is by definition only those things He has planned for us & that we walk in. Therefore it is possible to labor fruitlessly outside the will of God & be very busy while doing it. Note that in some inscrutable way it appears that we are going to be identified by or linked to the works that we have done in this life for the Lord throughout eternity.

## **B. The Blessing of the Supper (19:9)**

**(19:9) Then He said to me, 'Write blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'** - My view is that the marriage supper of the Lamb is the inaugural event of the Millennium Kingdom on earth as indicated in passages like Mt.8:11; 26:29; Lk.13:29; 22:18 & Mk.14:25. The marriage supper is the celebration of Christ's marriage to His Church which previously occurred in heaven. Who are the invited ones here? These would be all attendees, all the saved of all the dispensations who have been invited to the wedding supper of the Church & the Lord. **And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.'** - This could refer to the visions given by this current angel guide who began revealing to John in 17:1 & thus would include all that has come from him. This is a confirmation that all that has been said will come to pass exactly as prophesied. This would also confirm that the content of the vision should be taken literally (normally).

## **C. The Essence of True Worship (19:10)**

**(19:10) Then I fell at his feet to worship him.** - John is so overwhelmed by the sight that he mistakenly worships the angel instead of the Lord. He will do this very same thing again in 22:8. **But he said to me, 'Do not do that;** - The angel correctly rebukes John's behavior (Col.2:18). **I am a fellow servant of yours & your brethren** - What a privilege to be categorized together with the angels as fellow servants of God (Heb.1:14). How are we doing? **who hold the testimony of Jesus;** - To hold the testimony of Jesus is to have believed in the prophetic Scriptures concerning Him as revealed by the Holy Spirit through His holy prophets. **worship God.** - Only God is worthy of worship. One of the strongest evidences for the absolute deity of Jesus is that fact that He never once rebuked someone for offering Him worship (Mt.21:14-17; Lk.19:28-40; Jn.20:28,29). If He was not who He said he was then He would have responded just as this angel did & rebuked the worshiper. There is also a tacit rebuke of all those who worshiped the beast. **For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'** - What this means is that the Person & work of Christ is the very center, intent & goal of biblical prophecy (& Scripture itself for that matter, Lk.24:27). This is particularly relevant in that the very next verse launches into the details of Christ's

second coming to the earth in power & great glory. The only event that eclipses this one is the first coming of Christ & His death, burial & resurrection for the sins of mankind. That was a coming in humility but His return will be one of glory (Mt.25:31).

*"In many respects, Christ's second coming is not only the high point of Revelation, but the high point of all history. Here is the manifestation of the Son of God, & the beginning of the end of human rebellion. How poverty-stricken is any theology that minimizes the second coming of Christ, & how limited the hope that does not include this glorious climax to God's program of exalting His Son & putting all creation under His control (cf. Ps.2). Walvoord, p.287"*

## II. The Second Coming of Christ (19:11-16)

### Distinctions Between the Rapture & the Second Coming

| [The Rapture]                 | * | [The 2nd Coming]                 |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Translation of Believers      | * | Manifestation of Christ          |
| Saints caught up in the air   | * | Christ returns to the earth      |
| Christ comes for the believer | * | Christ returns with the believer |
| A message of comfort          | * | A message of judgment            |
| A mystery                     | * | Plainly taught in the OT & NT    |
| Unsaved are unaffected        | * | Unsaved are judged               |
| Israel unaffected             | * | Fulfills the covenants to Israel |
| For believers only            | * | Concerns all of mankind          |

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### A. His Description (19:11-13)

**(19:11) And I saw heaven opened,** - This opening is for the purpose of revealing the Son of God in preparation for His return to the earth as a warrior King. **& behold, a white horse,** - The rider of this white horse is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Whereas the Antichrist rides a white horse in the first seal judgment symbolizing a false peace that characterizes the beginning of the Tribulation Period, Christ rides a white horse for the purpose of waging war on the earth. A white horse symbolizes victory & triumph. The horse should be taken literally just as He who sat on it is literal. **& He who sat on it is called Faithful & True,** - Interestingly these are two of God's essential attributes (1Jn.1:9; Jn.3:33; 14:6) & since Christ is Jehovah God these epitaphs are fitting for Him (Rev.1:5; 3:7). Note also that God's essential attributes are to be reproduced in us as well here & now (1Cor.4:2; Ps.51:6). The second coming of Christ vindicates & glorifies the Person of Christ. Throughout history He has been cursed & vilified but through it all He remained faithful & true to Himself & His Word & will now receive His reward. For us it is a good thing that God is faithful & true. What if we could not trust what His word says? How could we even know if our salvation is sure? **& in righteousness He judges & wages war.** - Note that there is such a thing as a righteous war. What Christ is about to do is the right thing (He is also essentially righteous, 1Jn.1:9; Ps.11:7). This is the fulfillment of the sentiment in Romans 12:19b, *"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.* Frankly the believers in Christ from all the dispensations long for the day when God will vindicate His name & all those who have stood with Him. This is also the sentiment of **2Thess.1:3-12** to the Church under severe persecution. **(19:12) His eyes are a flame of fire,** - This of course is Christ in His glorified state as previously described in Rev.1:14 & 2:18. The flaming eyes are a symbol of His righteous, searching judgment. These same eyes purify the works of believers & what survives is rewarded (1Cor.3:10-17). Here however we have retributive judgment meted out upon the unbelievers. **& on His head are many diadems;** - These are symbols of His actual authority. In **Psalm 2** the Father gives Him the kingdoms of the earth. **& He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.** - This would appear to be an as yet unrevealed name that will perfectly represent all that He is, Has done & will do (Rev.3:12). **(19:13) He is clothed with a robe dipped**

**in blood,** - Although He shed His own blood in death on our behalf the reference here most likely is to the blood of His enemies about to be shed (Is.63:1-6; Rev.14:20) that will be sprinkled upon His raiment. The fact that His personal robe is dipped in it means that He is the executioner & the blood of His enemies will flow. This is very personal. Nothing indicates that anyone else but Him does the battling.

**& His name is called The Word of God.** - Lest there be any doubt as to who this rider is in context He is clearly identified as Jesus Christ (Jn.1:1-14; 1Jn.1:1).

## **B. His Armies (19:14)**

**(19:14) And the armies which are in heaven,** - We know that the holy angels will accompany Christ at His second coming (Mt.25:31; Jude 14,15) but here the reference appears to be the same Church that has just experienced the marriage to the Lamb. Note the same designation as 19:8 & then what is said next: **clothed in fine linen, white & clean,** - This clearly identifies His followers here as the Church. **were following Him on white horses.** - What is revealed here is that once the marriage has taken place the Church is seen as accompanying Christ wherever He goes & whatever He does. The source of the horses is of no matter. He has just been identified as the Word of God who is revealed to be the Creator of all things in John 1. Will He not speak as many horses into existence as is required?

## **C. His Actions (19:15,16)**

**(19:15) From His mouth comes a sharp sword,** - This is the word for a rather long broad sword that would make sweeping cuts as it is wielded. Note the emphasis on its sharpness (Heb.4:12). Here it is symbolic since it proceeds from His mouth & not His hand most likely a reference to the Word that proceeds from His mouth with which He will smite the nations. The exercise of his 'sword' however is deadly & bloody in its effect. **so that with it He may strike down the nations,** - This sword of His mouth will be the actual instrument of justice. Think about physically dying in this manner (are they cut in two? Or perhaps beheaded in the manner that they killed the saints?) & yet having still to face the Great White Throne Judgment to determine their level of or degree of everlasting punishment? **& He will rule them with a rod of iron;** - This is the language of Psalm 2 & Rev.2:27 which prophesizes this very event & especially God's attitude towards His enemies. It is interesting that there will be a necessity for this kind of rule even in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev.2:26,27; Ps.2:9). You will have many children born to the saints in the Kingdom who survive the Tribulation & these will need to be saved & the outward manifestations of their sin natures will have to be controlled through Christ's Kingdom Administration. At the end they will be allowed to express what they really are & they will be destroyed (20:9). Here however it is a reference to the subjugation of all His enemies at His coming. **& He treads the mighty wine press of the fierce wrath of God,** - This is a repeat of what was said in 14:19,20 (see also Is.63:1-6). The wine press is used metaphorically to express God's judgment of His enemies & to show that their blood will flow just as the juice flows from the wine press. This demonstrates categorically that although God is essentially love He is also essentially just & holy & that He is in perfect agreement with Himself so that He is glorified when any of His attributes are manifested. This negates the idea that He cannot judge because He is primarily love. He is infinite in His being & so one attribute cannot be greater than another but they work together to make Him what He essentially is. For example His love is a holy, true & righteous love & could never be a mere sentimentality. Jn.3:36 expresses this well, *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him."* Period. **the Almighty.** - As God Almighty Christ has the authority, the power, the holiness, the righteousness & the willingness to express His wrath upon His enemies. Yet for us who have believed He is not ashamed to call us brethren, think about that. **(19:16) And on His robe & on His thigh** - Note the clear references to His humanity. Christ has condescended to remain a theanthropic Person throughout eternity. He will always be the God-man. **He has a name**

**written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.'** - This says it all, Christ is Jehovah God & all in heaven & on the earth must submit to Him (Phil.2:5-11).

*"There is no wisdom & no understanding & no counsel against the Lord. Prov.21:30"*

### **III. The Campaign of Armageddon (19:17-21)**

#### **A. The Call to the Birds (19:17,18)**

**(19:17) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun,** - He is either standing in the light of the sun or he himself illuminates like the sun, see 18:1. **& he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heaven,** - Literal scavenger birds are intended, see 19:21. **'Come, assemble for the great supper of God,** - The angel is summoning to a great feast. Contrast this with invitation in 19:9. **(19:18) so that you may eat the flesh of kings & the flesh of commanders & the flesh of mighty men & the flesh of horses & of those who sit on them & the flesh of all men, both free men & slaves, & small & great.'** - These comprise the subjects of the buffet which is about to be served. God is no respecter of persons. He will save anyone who simply believes but by the same token He will judge all His enemies & that with perfect justice regardless of their so-called status in life. This is in fulfillment of Daniel's prediction that these nations will be crushed by the second coming of Christ to the earth (Dan.2:34,35,44; Zech.14:1-21). This will end the times of the Gentiles & also corresponds to the end of the age.

#### **B. The Two Armies (19:19)**

**(19:19) And I saw the beast** - This the resurrected Antichrist (13:1-10; 17:11) who leads his armies against Christ. **& the kings of the earth** - These would be the ten kings of 16:12-16 & 17:12-14 (& Daniel 2). **& their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse & against His army.** - What a strange, convoluted scene! Imagine being so out of touch with reality that one finds oneself attempting to make war with Almighty God. This just goes to demonstrate how deceptive & persuasive the Antichrist & false prophet will be. Great multitudes will be deceived. Let us also beware as believers that we are careful to learn the ways of the Lord lest we find ourselves in opposition to His will in this life. I cannot think of anything more pathetic than a child of God in opposition to God. Note also the absolute certainty of God's Word. God would have to be a liar or Himself deceived having put these predictions out there for them not to come true. The truth is that we can take God at His word & all His infinite power & character guarantees the outcome, He is Faithful & True.

#### **C. The Doom of the Beast (19:20)**

**(19:20) And the beast was seized,** - The Antichrist is summarily defeated & forcefully arrested. **& with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence,** - In like manner the false prophet is also neutralized. **by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast & those who worshiped his image;** - Repeats the manner in which he was able to delude the kings of the earth to follow the Antichrist. **these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.** - The lake of fire is the name given to the final abode of the lost. It is a place that has been prepared for the devil & his angels (Mt.25:41) but will also be the destiny of those who have refused the light that they had (Rom.1:20). It is the same as Gehenna or Hell. What is unusual here is that most humans physically die & descend to Hades, a temporary waiting place known as the realm of the

dead. There they are tormented awaiting resurrection to the Great White Throne Judgment where all their works have been recorded in God's books & they will be judged accordingly (Rev.20:11ff). In this case the Antichrist & his false prophet are cast directly into the lake of fire. We must assume that something like the translation of living believers at the Rapture must occur for these two so that they can receive bodies capable of withstanding the punishment Hell without being consumed (where the worm does not die & the fire is not quenched). There is also the implication that they have no need of the Great White Throne Judgment as there will be no degrees to their punishment, it will be the maximum sentence God is willing to bestow. They are most likely the first beings to occupy Hell, Satan will follow 1000 years later.

#### **D. The Destruction of the Armies (19:21)**

**(19:21) And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse,** - The remaining soldiers, as described in verse 18 will be killed by Christ who appears to be the One doing all the fighting. Thomas holds that all unbelievers on the earth will be slain at this point. However the fact that there must be the Judgment of the Sheep & Goats (Mt.25:31ff) prior to the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom shows that some unbelieving humans survive the Tribulation unto the end. **& all the birds were filled with their flesh.** - This is the completion of the summoning of the birds from verse 17, who begin the process of cleansing the battlefield of the carcasses.

*"The Word of God makes plain that God so loved the world that He gave His Son, & that all who avail themselves of the grace of God are immeasurably blessed in time & eternity. On the other hand, the same Word of God states plainly that those who spurn God's mercy must experience His judgment without mercy. How foolish it is to rest in the portions of the Word of God that speak of the love of God & reject the portions of the Word of God that deal with His righteous judgment. The age to come, while continuing to be a revelation of the grace of God, will give conclusive evidence that God brings every evil work into judgment & that those who spurn His grace must experience His wrath. Walvoord, p.29*