

## ***The Church of the Servant King***

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### **PROPHECY SERIES**

(Proph21T\_Revelation\_chp19\_Three Things Associated with Christ's Second Coming – Part 1)

#### **#1 – THE VIEW IN HEAVEN OF THE FALL OF BABYLON (19:1-10)**

After these things, I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; 2 because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." 3 And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever." 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen, Hallelujah!" 5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, 7 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

*"After these things"*

This phrase occurs 10 times in the book of Revelation. When it is combined with a word of perception (e.g. "I saw" or "I heard"), John is indicating that the revelation itself was unfolded to him in sequence rather than indicating the chronology associated with the events. In other words, the sequence in which John was given and describes the revelation does not always correlate to the sequence in which the events themselves will occur during the "last days."<sup>1</sup>

So, here in 19:1, John is indicating that after he was given revelation concerning "Babylon" that is recorded in chapters 17 and 18, the revelation that is recorded in chapter 19 was provided to him.

Chapters 17 and 18 are an interlude in the Revelation narrative. The destruction of Babylon the Great is predicted in 14:8 and 16:19.

And another angel followed, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality. (Rev 14:8)

And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And Babylon the great was remembered before god, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. (Rev 16:19)

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<sup>1</sup> See Charles H. Dyer, "The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 – Part 1" in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (July-September, 1987): 306-307 for an excellent analysis of the use of the phrase "after these things" in the book of Revelation.

Then, chapters 17 and 18 follow with more detail provided about this political-religious-economic system centered in “Babylon” that is Anti-Christ in focus and orientation. In these chapters, we are given additional insight into the nature of and ultimate destruction of the city and system that is used by Satan to execute his purposes on earth during the Tribulation period. For a time (probably the first half of the Tribulation period at least), the political-religious-economic system centered in the city of “Babylon” will exert its influence throughout the world supported by the “Beast” (i.e. the coalition of 10 kings, the most prominent of whom is the Anti-Christ). At a certain point (probably sometime during the last half of the Tribulation), the “beast” will completely destroy the city of “Babylon.” It is quite possible that the destruction of the city of “Babylon” by the Beast will occur in chronological proximity to the mid-point of the Tribulation. It is the mid-point of the Tribulation that Satan and his legions are cast from heaven to earth and that the Anti-Christ requires his image to be worshiped. All of these statements are supported by our previous studies of chapter 17 & 18.

### *Rejoicing Over the Fall of Babylon & the Chorus of the Multitudes in Heaven*

In 19:1-3, the occupants of heaven are pictured as rejoicing over the fall of Babylon. They praise God with the words “salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous.” These words pack a lot of meaning – more than we have time to develop in this overview of the chapter. However, note the following in relation to these words:

- “*Salvation*” – captures the redemptive nature of God’s plan for man and the world that was conceived in the omniscience of God in eternity past in anticipation of the rebellion of some of His creatures and the subjection of a portion of His creation to the rebellion’s leader, Lucifer.
- “*Glory*” – the ultimate objective of all of human and angelic history is the glorification of God.
- “*Power*” – reflects upon God’s omnipotence, thus His ability to accomplish His purpose in the midst of the “power-systems” of man and Satan aligned against Him.
- “*His judgments*” – a reference to all of the judgments that will be poured out upon those who continue to defy His purposes and align themselves with Satan’s attempt to retain dominion over the earth and challenge the essence of God.
- “*True and righteous*” – a reference to God’s veracity (truthfulness) because He is omniscient and no fact escapes His knowledge. Unlike human systems which sometimes reach wrong conclusions due to a lack of all of the facts, there are no facts that escape God’s notice; therefore, His response to sin and rebellion is perfectly consistent with His righteousness without being capricious, arbitrary, subjective or unfair.

*“He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality”* – The “great harlot” imagery highlights the nature of the religious system that is universal and ecumenical in nature, i.e. she “sits on many waters” (Rev 17:1). The “many waters” are the unbelievers of the world over which she holds influence. In chapter 17, John observed a “great harlot” who sat upon “many waters” (17:1) and a “woman sitting on a scarlet beast” (17:2). If there is a distinction between the two (i.e. the “harlot” and the “woman”), it is this – the “harlot” represents the ecumenical religious system used by Satan and that religious system is centered in the city of “Babylon,” the “woman” who sits on a scarlet beast (17:3). Both are eventually destroyed by the “beast” (who is also empowered by Satan) once the purposes of Satan have been accomplished through the religious system with its capital in the city of “Babylon.”

*“Her smoke rises up forever and ever”* – The divine judgments of Sodom and Gomorrah and Edom were previews of this judgment (cf. Gen 19:38; Isa 34:10). The smoke represents the effects of the fire that will destroy Babylon (cf. 17:16; 18:8, 9, 18). The punishment of God’s enemies will be everlasting (cf. vv. 20, 21; 14:11; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:46).

*“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, ‘Amen, Hallelujah!’”* – These are the same angelic beings that John has seen on previous occasions in the Revelation (see 4:9-10; 5:8, 14; 7:9-11; 14:3). The

twenty-four elders are pictured as seated on twenty-four thrones surrounding the throne room of heaven. The four living creatures are present as well. Each of these creatures is described as having eyes in front and back and within and had six wings. One resembled a lion; one, a calf; one, a man; and one, a flying eagle. When the Lamb, the only one worthy, is handed the scroll containing the judgments in chapter 5, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders are said to have fallen down before the Lamb and each one has a harp and golden bowls of incense which are the prayers of the saints. They are always pictured as leading the praise and worship of the Lamb and God in heaven.

*“For the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready”* – Who is the “bride” of the Lamb? Is it the Church Age Body of Christ as most dispensationalists assert?<sup>2</sup> My view is that the “bride” is the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem is portrayed as housing the believers of the Age of Israel and the Tribulation period. Believers of the Church Age Body of Christ are not pictured in Scripture as located there. They could be, but Scripture doesn’t specifically mention them there.

Note that the bride/bridegroom analogy is always set in Scripture during some portion of the Age of Israel. It is mentioned by Jesus Christ, the Lamb, Who frequently referred to Himself as a bridegroom (cf. Matt 9:15; 22:2-14; 25:1-13; Mk 2:19-20; Lu 5:34-35; 14:15-24; Jn 3:29). For the Jews, the wedding figure stressed the intimate relationship that will exist between God and His people in the earthly messianic kingdom. The passages to which most dispensationalists appeal to support their position that the Church Age Body of Christ is the “bride” of Christ (e.g. 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32; & John 3:29) are anything but conclusive on the matter.

*“And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints”* – The “righteous acts of the saints” has the deeds of believers in view – not just their faith. Throughout the Gospels and the book of Revelation, I think it is important to understand that we are viewing points in history that are proximate to the coming of the Messianic kingdom on earth. During Jesus’ earthly ministry and during the Tribulation period, the “gospel of the kingdom” will be proclaimed. The long anticipated and prophesied earthly kingdom over which the Messiah of Israel rules was “at hand” or will be “at hand” (in the case of the future Tribulation period). In other words, all that was needed for it to be made a reality on earth was for certain conditions to exist – namely, acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

During these periods of human history, Scripture places a strong emphasis upon the “deeds” of believers as evidence of their acceptance of this “gospel” and of repentant hearts toward this message. If the Jews, who are the pivot around which God’s program revolves during the Age of Israel, were to be (and are to be during the Tribulation) the primary evangelistic agent to Gentiles during these periods, God expected them to demonstrate their faith in a very visible manner, e.g. baptism, works of charity, works of kindness, etc. Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) and many of Jesus’ parables such as the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30) and Jesus’ description of the righteous at His coming (Matt 25:31-46) as illustrations.

It is clear that in these passages that are set within the context of the Age of Israel, there is a close correlation between the faith of the believer and the works of righteousness worthy of

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<sup>2</sup> To support this conclusion, most dispensationalists refer to passages such as 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32; & John 3:29. In addition, a Scriptural logic is applied to support this interpretation. They admit that such passages as Revelation 21:2, 9-10 & 22:17 equate the bride with the New Jerusalem; however, they contend that Israel cannot be a part of the bride since the bride is described as coming to earth with the Lord at His 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent and Old Testament saints are not resurrected until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent (Dan 12:1-2). However, while true, this overlooks the fact that the martyred saints of the Tribulation (Jew and Gentile) are seen in heaven rejoicing over the fall of Jerusalem. Even if they have yet to receive their resurrection bodies, Tribulation saints are still associated with the “last days” of the Age of Israel, not the Body of Christ.

kingdom presence and life. The fact that God expected this correlation to exist in the lives of believers of the Age of Israel (pre-Church Age Body of Christ and post-Church Age Body of Christ) is presented in Scripture as the norm. In contrast to Pauline doctrine regarding the Gentile-centric Body of Christ of the present dispensation that allows for the carnal believer to still possess eternal life, yet be denied eternal rewards, there seems to be no examples of such a condition amongst the people of faith within the Age of Israel proximate to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom on earth.

This fact has led to various interpretations and views regarding the means of obtaining eternal life, i.e. the means of salvation. However, a further development of such topics as “Lordship Salvation,” “arminianism,” and the views of some non-Acts 2 dispensationalists that there are different mechanics or requirements for salvation in different dispensations is beyond the scope of our present study. However, suffice it to say for now that my view is that one’s eternal destiny (regardless of dispensation) is determined by the object of one’s faith in spite of the fact that Scripture sometimes establishes a close correlation between one’s faith and one’s deeds – especially in regards to that portion of the Age of Israel that is proximate to the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

*The “marriage supper of the Lamb”* - In the ancient Near East, certain marriage customs provide an excellent backdrop for our understanding of this passage. The marriage consisted of three main events.

First, the parents chose a bride for the groom. This may sound a little archaic and uncivilized to us; however, in reality, this system worked quite well in the majority of cases. Communities were relatively tight-knit and families knew each other. Also, the wisdom of parents was applied in such a way that matters of character played a heavy role in the selection of a mate. The “bride” is the New Jerusalem. The “bridegroom” is Jesus, the Messiah.

Second, when the time for marriage came, the groom would leave His home with His friends, go to the home of the bride, and escort her from her home to his. This will take place when Christ, the Messiah, returns to the earthly Jerusalem (His home) with His friends (the saints of the Age of Israel in their resurrection bodies) to rule and reign where He will be joined by His bride, the New Jerusalem (cf. John 14:1-2; Rev 21:2). The distinction between the saints (the friends of the bridegroom) in their resurrection bodies and the New Jerusalem is clarified in Revelation 21:22-27 where the New Jerusalem is seen as being illuminated by the glory of the Messiah; the nations of the earth walking in its light; and access to it being granted to those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Third, the groom of the ancient Near East provided a feast for his bride and his friends at his home that many times lasted several days. Scripture allows for various interpretations of how long this marriage supper will last. However, it will take place on earth either at the beginning of the Millennium, throughout the Millennium, or beginning with the Millennium and continuing throughout eternity.

In our passage (Rev 19:7-9), the wedding of the bride to the bridegroom, followed by the marriage feast is pictured as imminent. (See the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14).

## **#2 – CHRIST COMES ON A WHITE HORSE (19:11-16)**

11 And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself, 13 and He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen white and clean, were

following Him on white horses. 15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

This passage describes the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and King of the earth. From one perspective, the return of Jesus Christ to the earth is the climax of all that has preceded in the book of Revelation. From another perspective, it is the first of seven final things that John saw and recorded. The seven final things that John sees and records are in chronological sequence and resume the chronology of events on earth begun in Revelation 16:21.

- Christ's return
- Satan's capture
- The binding of Satan
- The Millennium
- Satan's ultimate end
- The Second resurrection and judgment of unbelievers
- The establishment of the "new heavens and new earth"

Here, it is Christ Who is pictured riding on the symbol of victory and conquering power – the white horse (cf. Rev 6:2 where we see the Anti-Christ so pictured). He comes out of heaven to make war with the beast and defeat him. John uses language to describe Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming that has close parallel to the language of the ancient Hebrew prophets of Israel (e.g. Isa 11:3-5).

Jesus Christ's eyes suggest His piercing judgment of sin that takes everything into account. His many crowns symbolize His right to rule the world as King of kings.

His unknown name was not known to John or to anyone else at that time, but it may become known when Jesus Christ returns (cf. 2:17; Matt. 11:27). The fact that Jesus' name at His 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent is described in such a way is probably a reflection of Jesus' supremacy over all.

Throughout the ancient world a name revealed the nature of an individual, who he is and what he is. The unknown name of the Christ comports with the fact that his nature, his relationships to the Father, and even his relationship to humanity, transcend all human understanding.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible that there is another thought. Those who practiced magic in the first century believed that to know a name gave power over him whose name it was. John may well be saying that no-one has power over Christ. He is supreme. His name is known only to Himself.<sup>4</sup>

For a comparison of many of the symbolism found in this passage, consider the following analysis:

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<sup>3</sup> George Raymond Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (New Century Bible Commentary series. Revised ed. London: Morgan & Scott, 1974; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., and London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1983), 279-80 cited in Constable, "Notes on Revelation," [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)

<sup>4</sup> Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Tyndale New Testament Commentary series. Reprint ed., Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, and Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 230 cited in Constable, "Notes on Revelation," [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)

- The blood on His robe – the slaughter of His enemies (cf. Isa 63:2-3)
- The Word of God – His identity (cf. Jn 1:1-3, 14; Isa 49:2; Psa 33:6; Heb 4:12)

Angels will accompany Jesus Christ at His second coming (cf. Matt 13:41; 16:27; 24:30-31; Mk 8:38; Lu 9:26; 2 Thess 1:7), but it is believers in their resurrection bodies who ride the horses (cf. 17:14; 2:27; Zech. 14:5). Their dress connects them with the Lamb's bride (v. 8).

The references in Hebrew Scripture to this event are extensive. Consider Isaiah 11:4; 49:2; 63:1-6; Ezekiel 20:33-38; and Psalm 2:9:45 as examples (cf. Matt 25:31-46).