

# **The Book of Revelation**

## **Session 11 - The Lamb's Ultimate Victory (Chapters 19-20)**

### **Book Overview**

The Book of Revelation can be divided into five sections:

1. Introduction: Establishing Context and Conflict (Chapter 1-5)
2. Action: The Main Story (Chapter 6-11)
3. Action: The Main Story Retold - Focus on Satan's Schemes (Chapters 12-14)
4. Action: The Main Story Retold - Focus on Mankind's Sinfulness (Chapters 15-19)
5. Ending: Resolution (Chapter 20-22)

Chapter 19 concludes the second retelling of the action, with far greater detail as to what the return of Jesus will look like. In many ways, chapter 19 is the climax of this book, where we've been heading all along since chapters 4-5, but in order for us to fully understand it, it was necessary to explore its themes through the previous chapters of the book. Chapter 20 begins the ending of the story, as the full glory of Jesus' victory is seen on the earth.

### **Chapter Overview**

These two chapters can be divided into five sections:

1. Heaven Rejoices at Jesus' Return (Revelation 19:1-10)
2. Jesus Triumphs Over His Enemies (Revelation 19:11-21)
3. Jesus' Kingdom on the Earth (Revelation 20:1-6)
4. The Final Judgement of Satan (Revelation 20:7-10)
5. The Final Judgement of all Mankind (Revelation 20:11-15)

These chapters conclude John's long vision (ch. 15-19) that helps us understand the sinfulness of the world and the severity of God's wrath. In this closing section, all of heaven rejoices as Jesus confronts his enemies and establishes his throne on the earth, bringing an end to the reign of sin once and for all.

### **Heaven Rejoices at Jesus' Return (Revelation 19:1-10)**

*Verse 1-2:*

*"After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgements'"* - Echoes of the song in Revelation 7:9-12. Heaven celebrates Jesus' judgements, for they are wholly good.

*"He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries"* - Jesus will confront and defeat once and for all this ancient spirit of Babylon, which leads the whole world astray.

*“He has avenged on her the blood of his servants”* - Another reference to Deuteronomy 32:43. Jesus’ return will mark the final and complete fulfilment of promises made thousands of years ago, to Israel and to all mankind. His return will bring forth justice for His people and atonement for the land.

Verse 3:

*“And again they shouted: ‘Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever’”* - Heaven rejoices because Babylon can no longer corrupt the earth. Her end will be eternal.

Verse 4:

*“The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: ‘Amen, Hallelujah!’”* - The elders and creatures continue in their endless cycle of worship. God’s judgements bring to them fresh revelation of His love and His justice. God reveals His character even through His judgements.

Verse 5:

*“Then a voice came from the throne, saying: ‘Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!’”* - Echoes of Revelation 11:18. This is a time for all those who fear God to worship. For the earth to join in the worship of heaven.

Verse 6-8:

*“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns!’”* - This multitude in heaven, consisting of many who died during this time, celebrate that God reigns over all, and that He has taken His authority and begun to reign (Revelation 11:17).

*“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready”* - Jesus is the one who will bring unity to heaven and earth (Revelation 5:13, Ephesians 1:10). All of this ends in a wedding where we will be united with Christ forever. God will emphasise to the church their identity as a bride - and by continuing to say yes to Jesus we will make ourselves ready for the day of His wedding.

*“‘Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s people)”* - Though we make ourselves ready, God is the one who gives to us righteousness we could never earn. He is committed to our holiness, which is why this book began with the seven letters to the churches.

Verse 9:

*“Then the angel said to me, ‘Write this down: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ And he added, ‘There are the true words of God’”* - God wants to give us greater understanding of what we’ve been invited to, so we can live our lives now in light of eternity.

Verse 10:

*“At this 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 with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!’”*

*For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus” - John is so moved by what the angel said he falls down to worship! But the angel reminds him that the Holy Spirit reveals these mysteries to reveal more of Jesus. He is the one to be worshipped.*

### **Jesus Triumphs Over His Enemies (Revelation 19:11-21)**

*Verse 11:*

*“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war” - See Revelation 4:1. Jesus is the One who is carrying out the plan of God to bring unity to heaven and earth. John started the vision by seeing God seated on a throne - he now ends the vision with heaven opening and seeing Jesus on a throne (Revelation 20:11). Jesus is the true man on a white horse (Psalm 45:3-6). He answers the question of Revelation 13:4 - He is the one who will confront the greatest wickedness the world has ever seen. His return will be a cause to rejoice to those who have lived through the tribulation.*

*Verse 12:*

*“His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but himself” - He is the man John saw at the start of this book. He has not changed - John uses the present tense to describe Him! This is him fully expressing His desire for us and His authority to bring sin to an end. Contrast with the beast who has many heads and many crowns (Revelation 13:1) - Jesus is the true ruler of the earth.*

*Verse 13:*

*“He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God” - Genesis 37:31. Jesus is still the sacrificial lamb. This is the full expression of His victory on the cross. His authority to judge comes not from His own power but from His own sacrifice.*

*Verse 14:*

*“The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean” - Jesus will return leading the armies of heaven, including all those who died during this time (1 Thessalonians 4:14).*

*Verse 15:*

*“Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron sceptre.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty” - Jesus’ power and authority is enacted through His words and commands - just as God spoke and the earth was created (Genesis 1:3, Revelation 1:16). Such will be the evil of the earth, and the level of hatred against Jesus and His people, Jesus’ coming will be one of physical war. This chapter is tying together the many layers of this book (Revelation 11:18, 14:14-20).*

*Verse 16:*

*“On his robe and on his thigh he has his name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” - There is something very significant about the revealing of Jesus’s name. Just as the*

antichrist will deceive people into taking his own name, Jesus will reveal His name - the true king - when He comes. Our best preparation is to seek to get to know Him better!

*Verse 17-18:*

*“And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ‘Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small’”* - See Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20. There will be a literal gathering of birds to feast on the flesh of the dead. This day has been ordained by God - victory is so certain he gathers the birds before the battle even starts. We're reminded in Ezekiel 39:21-29 that on this day God will remember His promises to Israel to deliver them and pour out His Spirit on them (Revelation 10:7, 11:13).

*Verse 19-20:*

*“Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the lake of burning sulphur”* - See Zechariah 14. Though the armies are gathered to Jerusalem, their hatred is first and foremost and God. Jesus will confront the beast and the false prophet and they will be thrown alive into the lake of burning sulphur. Their judgement will be final and eternal.

*Verse 21:*

*“The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh”* - Everyone else is killed and will be resurrected and judged later (Revelation 20:12). See also Isaiah 49:1-7.

### **Jesus' Kingdom on the Earth (Revelation 20:1-6)**

*Verse 1:*

*“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain”* - See Revelation 9:1. This angel has been given authority from heaven over the Abyss.

*Verse 2-3:*

*“He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time”* - This angel has great power to be able to seize Satan! John emphasises that Satan is the one who has been against God right from the start (Genesis 3:1). He is now bound for a thousand years where he cannot deceive the nations any more. This is without doubt speaking of a future reality (see Revelation 2:13, where Satan is said to have a throne in a city). The earth will be completely free of Satan's influence in this time.

Verse 4:

*"I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on the foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years"* - Our destiny is to sit on thrones with Jesus and judge the nations (Matthew 19:28). When Jesus returns, He will appoint His people to rule and reign over the earth under Him. Through us He will literally bring His kingdom to the earth. This passage is clear that all those who died in the tribulation and remained faithful to Jesus will be resurrected when Jesus returns (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

Verse 5:

*"(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection"* - Everyone else will remain dead for a thousand years before the final judgement where all people will be resurrected.

Verse 6:

*"Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years"* - We are blessed if we share in this resurrection. This is God's plan for us. The second death (eternal torment) will hold no fear for us.

### **The Final Judgment of Satan (Revelation 20:7-10)**

Verse 7-8:

*"When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth - Gog and Magog - and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore"* - This thousand year reign of Jesus is described in many Old Testament passages (Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 11:1-9, Ezekiel 47:1-12, Micah 4:1-5, Zechariah 14:6-21). It will be a time of prosperity and peace as the world is brought under Jesus' leadership. Yet at the end of it Satan will be released once more and he will again deceive the nations. In order to understand why, we must remember that Jesus' purpose is to prepare the earth for God's return (1 Corinthians 15:24-25). Through His end-time judgements He has removed from the earth all sin and deception. Yet now He is dealing with the human heart. We remember the Passover story which so closely follows the story of Revelation. After God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He then has spent the rest of history bringing 'Egypt' out of the Israelites. We do not fully understand His purposes, but it seems that binding and then releasing Satan is part of His plan to completely and utterly remove all sin from the earth once and for all (1 Corinthians 15:22). Gog and Magog is a reference to Ezekiel 38-39. Gog is a title - like Satan. But here John seems to be talking about symbolic regions in the earth, every place that still sets itself against God.

Verse 9:

*“They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them”* - All those who are deceived will meet the same end as those when Jesus returned.

Verse 10:

*“And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever”*  
- The devil is finally thrown into the lake of fire, never to escape. Jesus has completely and utterly removed sin from the face of the earth, and He has done it in a way that is completely just and good.

### **The Final Judgment of all Mankind (Revelation 20:11-15)**

Verse 11:

*“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them”* - John began this vision seeing a throne and someone sitting on it. Now he sees Jesus sitting on His earthly throne. Everything about Him is pure and holy. Everything will be laid bare in this time. There will be nowhere for anything or anyone to hide.

Verse 12:

*“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books”* - This is the second resurrection (Acts 24:15, John 5:28-29) when all be brought back to life to give an account for their lives.

Verse 13:

*“The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done”* - Everyone is judged for what they have done and how they lived their lives (Matthew 25:31-46).

Verse 14:

*“Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death”* - Finally, death and Hades are sentenced to eternal torment. Death itself is killed! Jesus held the keys of death and Hades through all of this story (Revelation 1:18). Now He is taking full authority over them.

Verse 15:

*“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire”* - There can be no cheating or cutting corners. There is only one way to eternal life - Jesus (John 14:6).

## Summary

These chapters highlight eight key themes that run through the book:

1. That God's judgements are just and true (Revelation 19:2)
2. The eternal destruction of Babylon (Revelation 19:2-3)
3. The punishment of the beast (Revelation 19:20)
4. The purification of God's people (Revelation 19:7-8)
5. That all of this is unto the revelation of Jesus (Revelation 19:10)
6. Jesus is returning in God's wrath to judge the wicked (Revelation 19:14-15)
7. That those who remained faithful to God will receive eternal life (Revelation 20:4)
8. Through Jesus, sin and death will finally be removed from the earth (Revelation 20:10,14)

<b>Chapter 19</b>	<b>The Book of Revelation</b>
Verse 1	7:10, 7:12
Verse 2	14:8, 15:3, 16:5-6, 17:1-2, 17:6, 18:3, 18:24
Verse 3	14:11, 15:1, 17:16, 18:8
Verse 4	4:9-11, 7:12, 11:16
Verse 5	11:18, 14:7, 15:4
Verse 6	7:9-10, 11:17
Verse 7	7:12, 11:17
Verse 8	3:5
Verse 11	4:1, 6:2
Verse 12	1:14, 1:17, 13:1
Verse 13	1:13, 5:6
Verse 14	2:27, 3:5
Verse 15	1:16, 2:27, 12:5, 14:10, 14:19, 15:1, 15:7, 16:19
Verse 17	14:19-20
Verse 18	6:15
Verse 19	16:13-14
Verse 20	13:14