



The Last Battle

Summary and Goal

After the defeat of Babylon and the pouring out of the bowls of God's wrath on His enemies, we see yet another scene of worship (hallelujah!), and preparations made for the "marriage supper of the Lamb." Jesus will come as the bridegroom—our warrior-judge on the white horse, fighting the final battle for His bride—and single-handedly defeat the beast and false prophet.

Main Passages

Revelation 19:6-16

Session Outline

1. Our Lord God, the Almighty, Reigns! (Revelation 19:6)
2. The Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10)
3. Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11-16)

Theological Theme

John's Revelation ultimately communicates the fundamental theological truth that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is accomplishing His purposes in this world and is guiding history to a specific end.

Christ Connection

Jesus is the warrior-king who judges the nations and executes judgment upon all of God's enemies. Where before He was the Lamb that was slain, now we see that He is also the Lion from the tribe of Judah.

Missional Application

We have the great privilege now to testify of God's holiness and worth to people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Historical Context of Revelation

Purpose

Much of the book of Revelation focuses on events at the end of the age (eschatology), more so than any other book in the Bible. But it also focuses on practical choices that believers and unbelievers must make in the course of their lives that have far-reaching consequences at the end.

Author

The traditional view holds that the author of Revelation is the apostle John, who wrote the Fourth Gospel and the three letters of John. Evidences for this view include the following. (1) The writer referred to himself as “John” (1:4,9; 22:8). (2) He had personal relationships with the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4,11; 2-3). (3) His circumstances at the time of writing (1:9) matched those of John the apostle (who was placed in Asia Minor from about AD 70 to 100 by reliable historical sources from the second century AD). (4) The saturation of the book with Old Testament imagery and echoes implies a Jewish writer, like John, operating in overwhelmingly Gentile Asia Minor.

Setting

The initial audience that received the book of Revelation was a group of seven local churches in southwest Asia Minor (1:11; 2-3). Some of these congregations were experiencing persecution (2:9-10,13), probably under the Roman emperor Domitian (ruled AD 81-96). Others had doctrinal and practical problems (2:6,13-15,20-23). Also behind these surface problems was the backdrop of unseen but powerful spiritual warfare (2:10,14,24; 3:9).

Special Features

The resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ revealed himself to the apostle John, who had been imprisoned “on the island called Patmos” (1:9). Christ’s twofold purpose was: (1) to “unveil” a spiritual diagnosis for seven of the churches in Asia Minor with which John was familiar (chaps. 2-3), and (2) to reveal to John a series of visions setting forth events and factors related to the end times (chaps. 4-22).

The book of Revelation provides an almost complete overview of theology. There is much in this book about Christ, mankind and sin, the people of God (both the church and Israel), holy angels, and Satan and the demons. There is important material on God’s power and tri-unity (i.e., Trinity), plus aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit and the nature of Scripture.

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Session Plan

The Last Battle

Introduction

- ? What is your most prized possession? If your home was going to be destroyed and you could only save one object, what would you choose?
- ? What is worth giving up for this possession? Would you give your life for that possession? Why or why not? Why is it illogical for a person to give up their life for a possession? Is there anything or anyone that you would give your life for?

This chapter describes the victory of the people of God over Babylon through the reigning King—Almighty God—and the worship, celebration, and Christological victory that ensues.

1. Our Lord God, the Almighty, Reigns! (Revelation 19:6)

Everything will be right in heaven. The bitterness, brokenness, and exhaustion that haunts our steps here on this earth will vanish. Everything will be right; all things will be fitting. That's why in the book of Revelation when we are given a glimpse into heaven what we see is worship.

John described what he experienced, saying “Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying, Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty, reigns!” (v. 6)

- ? Why was the great multitude crying out in worship to God? How are we called to do the same?
- ? Verse 6 is an intense picture of worship. What place would you say emotion has in right worship of God? Why is it important that worship go beyond mere emotion?

2. The Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10)

The bride set apart for the Lamb, in episode after episode, is seen holding fast to the testimony about Jesus. It may be a bit uncomfortable for us to

note that the keyword here is “testimony.” In other words, they weren’t commended for maintaining the right belief. They were commended for testifying of Christ, verbally expressing that right belief.

You may feel some relief that you don’t live in first-century Roman Empire and can freely worship as a Christian. But these saints weren’t lauded for worshipping. They were lauded for testifying to those around them of Christ. They were slaughtered, beheaded, and devoured for doing so. Is Christ worthy of this price? They believed so. Do you?

- ❓ What does the imagery of a wedding express? Why does it make sense in this context?
- ❓ What are the righteous deeds of the saints that make up the fine linen with which the church clothes herself?

3. Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11-16)

Jesus took on flesh and was born to a virgin. He was fully man and fully God. He lived a life that was fully pleasing and obedient to God the Father. Paul described it this way: “he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:8-11).

- ❓ White is the color of victory, representing Jesus’ victory prior to the battle. How could Jesus be victorious before the battle even took place?
- ❓ Perhaps the most unusual description of Jesus is found in verse 13—His robe was dipped in blood. What do you think this meant? Why is this significant?

Conclusion

- ❓ Do you treasure Christ and worship joyfully and passionately? Do you worship in spirit and in truth? How are you challenged by today’s study?
- ❓ Are you holding firmly to your testimony about Jesus? To whom have you testified this week? This month? This year? Who is God calling you to testify to now?
- ❓ What is your spiritual state? When Jesus returns will you share in His victory or will you partake in His righteous judgment? How do you need to respond to Him today?

❓ For Further Discussion

How should the faithfulness of Jesus on our behalf lead us to respond in faithfulness to Him?



Expanded Session Content

The Last Battle

Introduction

- ❓ What is your most prized possession? If your home was going to be destroyed and you could only save one object, what would you choose?
- ❓ What is worth giving up for this possession? Would you give your life for that possession? Why or why not? Why is it illogical for a person to give up their life for a possession? Is there anything or anyone that you would give your life for?

Many people would gladly give up their lives for something that they deem to be worthy of such a great sacrifice: one's country, family, or freedom. In today's lesson we will be confronted with a shocking reality. It's this: Christians testify of Christ unto death. Christians believe the gospel and are therefore compelled to testify of Christ, no matter the cost. It's that simple and that shocking. It's shocking because many of us have been led to believe that being a Christian means nothing more than going to church, reading the Bible, and praying. Those activities are absolutely necessary and fundamental to the Christian life. But, the fact is this: Christians also testify.


Session Summary

This chapter describes the victory of the people of God over Babylon through the reigning King—Almighty God—and the worship, celebration, and Christological victory that ensues.

1. Our Lord God, the Almighty, Reigns! (Revelation 19:6)

Everything will be right in heaven. The bitterness, brokenness, and exhaustion that haunts our steps here on this earth will vanish. Everything will be right; all things will be fitting. That's why in the book of Revelation when we are given a glimpse into heaven what we see is worship.


John described what he experienced, saying “Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying, Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty, reigns!” (v. 6)

 Why was the great multitude crying out in worship to God? How are we called to do the same?

The description that John gave is vivid, and if you’ve ever visited a large waterfall then you can hear it even now. Before you ever reach the falls you hear it and feel it: the rush of water crashing into itself. The larger the falls, the more booming the roar. It’s frightening and breathtaking. We can imagine that John’s heart skipped a beat when the worship of the multitudes thundered through every fiber of his being.

The multitude was crying out in worship for this one fundamental reason: God is worthy of worship. In heaven, all of God’s people will recognize His infinite beauty and worth, and worship will be unceasing. The Triune God will be exalted in unending, uninhibited worship by the blood-bought church of Christ from every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Don’t misunderstand this point. This is not to say that God will undergo some change and He will then rise to the level of deserving this kind of worship. God’s final judgment and the defeat of His enemies are not what make Him worthy. He is already and has always been worthy. The difference will be that we will understand and see clearly His worth and beauty as we will be free from the hindrances of sin, sickness, tiredness, relational conflicts, fear, uncertainty, insecurity, and the like. We will see Him as He is, and we will experience supreme joy in responding rightly to Him with white-hot worship. Our voices will join in the multitudes and become a part of the deluge of praise that sounded like Niagara Falls to John’s ear.

 Verse 6 is an intense picture of worship. What place would you say emotion has in right worship of God? Why is it important that worship go beyond mere emotion?

The words used in worship throughout the Bible and in the book of Revelation are meaningful. They matter. It’s easy to get caught up in the emotional exuberance and passionate joy of the worship experience. And we should be brimming with fitting emotions as we turn our hearts toward God. But it isn’t emotion only. We worship God in spirit and truth. Jesus said, “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)

We must worship God in truth, which means that our worship is in response to and anchored in right and true views of God. After all, if we say we are worshipping God, but our understanding of who God is isn't true, then our worship is corrupted and false.

The multitude's worship was God-centered, not man-centered. They used significant and thoroughly biblical designations of God. He is Lord, the one who rules. He is God, the one true and living God. And He is "Almighty," all-powerful, sovereign, fully able to accomplish all of His holy will. Finally, He reigns—He rules over the entire world and is accomplishing His purposes fully.

Their worship had contemporary implications and significance for John. The Roman emperors preferred the phrase "deus et dominus noster" to be used by the people to describe them. In Latin this means "Our God and Master." Early Christians were put to the test in the Roman Empire by being forced to say "Caesar is Lord" and burn incense to him or face severe persecution. John, no doubt, had seen this first hand. Now he was hearing a multitude so vast that their words sounded like peals of thunder proclaiming that YHWH was their God and Master.

2. The Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10)

The worship continued, but now the worshippers announced that the marriage of the Lamb had come. Now that the marriage of the Lamb had arrived, Christians were an unblemished bride clothed in fine linen, clean and pure.



What does the imagery of a wedding express? Why does it make sense in this context?

Weddings are emotional and have great significance. The imagery of the marriage of the Lamb is meant to express joy, love, and intimacy between Christ and His church. The best relationship between a man and his wife is meant to foreshadow the perfect love and harmony that God's people will experience with Christ.

If you are married, you may wonder if this could really be the best way to describe our future in heaven with Jesus. If you have experienced a broken marriage or abuse in marriage, then the thought may even be repulsive. It's vital to be careful that we not let broken experiences ruin what the Lord has intended for our benefit. It is helpful to consider the aspects of the best marriages and apply those to what our experience will be in heaven. Virtues such as love, faithfulness, joy, community, security, and peace will be ours, as we know our God fully.

Marriage as a Picture of the Gospel

Revelation 19:7-10 pictured the marriage supper of the Lamb. For more examples of marriage language pointing to God's faithfulness to His people, see Isaiah 54:5, Hosea 2:19-20, and Ephesians 5:26-27.



What are the righteous deeds of the saints that make up the fine linen with which the church clothes herself?

When the book of Revelation mentions “righteous deeds” it is referring to Christians holding firmly to their testimony about Jesus. Namely, that Jesus is Lord, Son of God, risen from the grave. In John’s context, holding firm to their testimony about Jesus had resulted in all of the other Apostles being martyred. John himself was almost martyred. According to tradition, John was discovered to be ministering in Ephesus and was called to give an account to Domitian in AD 81. He was boiled in oil, which didn’t kill him, so he was banished to Patmos. It was on the island of Patmos that John received his Revelation.

The bride set apart for the Lamb, in episode after episode, is seen holding fast to the testimony about Jesus. It may be a bit uncomfortable for us to note that the keyword here is “testimony.” In other words, they weren’t commended for maintaining the right belief. They were commended for testifying of Christ, verbally expressing that right belief.

You may feel some relief that you don’t live in first-century Roman Empire and can freely worship as a Christian. But these saints weren’t lauded for worshipping. They were lauded for testifying to those around them of Christ. They were slaughtered, beheaded, and devoured for doing so. Is Christ worthy of this price? They believed so. Do you?

3. Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11-16)

At this point in the Revelation, the bridegroom, Jesus Christ, Faithful and True, arrived. At long last, Jesus had come to rescue His people by judging their enemies. Christ would defeat the Beast, the False Prophet, and the gathered armies. Before the battle occurred (19-21) a description of Christ the victor is given (11-16).



White is the color of victory, representing Jesus’ victory prior to the battle. How could Jesus be victorious before the battle even took place?

Jesus is already victorious because He was the one who did not know sin and became sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). In Jesus’ atoning death and resurrection, God erased the certificate of debt that we owed, taking it away by nailing it to the cross. God disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them in Jesus (Colossians 2:14-15).

Persevering Faith

The theme of Christians holding firmly to their testimony about Jesus is prominent in the book of Revelation. See Revelation 1:9; 6:9; 11:7; 12:11; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4.

Jesus took on flesh and was born to a virgin. He was fully man and fully God. He lived a life that was fully pleasing and obedient to God the Father. Paul described it this way: “he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:8-11).

Jesus’ humiliation resulted in His exaltation. He accomplished His mission as the perfect substitute sacrifice and ascended to the right hand of the Father. As the end of history as we know it comes to a close, there is no mystery as to who will be victorious.



Perhaps the most unusual description of Jesus is found in verse 13—His robe was dipped in blood. What do you think this meant? Why is this significant?

This may seem strange to us, but it would have been a terrifyingly striking image to a first-century reader. This verse drew from Isaiah 63:1-6 in which God described His judgment and wrath against the unrighteous: “I trampled them in my anger and ground them underfoot in my fury; their blood spattered my garments, and all my clothes were stained” (v. 3).

Jesus’ robe was splattered with the blood of His enemies, indicating his final judgment against sin and victory over those who are opposed to Him. In John’s hearing, it would be specifically the blood of those who have spilled the blood of his brothers and sisters. Ultimately, this is a warning for us today. There are only two sides in the book of Revelation: those who profess Christ and hold fast to their testimony about Jesus and those who reject Christ. There will be no middle ground when Christ, faithful and true, makes His appearance on the white horse, arrayed for battle.

Conclusion

The book of Revelation is a book of worship. Every time John received a glimpse into the goings-on of heaven he saw worship of the one true and living God. Of course that’s what is happening in heaven! Why would we expect anything different? There is nothing more right and fitting than for the creation to respond to the infinite worth and beauty of God. In heaven, our ability to comprehend and know God’s worth will be far greater than now. For this reason, our worship will also far exceed its current capacity.

The infinite worth of Christ is static. The early Christians saw it and treasured Christ. They counted Him so worthy that they did not shrink back from even death. This holding fast to their testimony of Christ unto death are the good deeds that made up the pure garment that clothed the bride of Christ, the Church. It is an uncomfortable reality to grapple with for some Christians to realize that followers of Jesus are to testify. That is, they open their mouths and tell others of the gospel.

Jesus is already victorious because of His finished and final work on the cross on behalf of sinners. The battle is already won, but only those who are in Christ will share in His victory. All others will partake in the bitterness of His wrath.

- ❓ Do you treasure Christ and worship joyfully and passionately? Do you worship in spirit and in truth? How are you challenged by today's study?
- ❓ Are you holding firmly to your testimony about Jesus? To whom have you testified this week? This month? This year? Who is God calling you to testify to now?
- ❓ What is your spiritual state? When Jesus returns will you share in His victory or will you partake in His righteous judgment? How do you need to respond to Him today?

Prayer of Response

Take time to worship God in prayer. Exalt His name. Express how great and glorious you know God to be. Pray also for boldness to hold firm to your testimony about Jesus Christ. Pray for opportunities to testify today. Finally, offer a prayer of thanksgiving that you will share in Christ's victory because of His sacrifice on your behalf. Give thanks that though you were once counted with those who were bound for His wrath, you are now a part of His bride.

Additional Resources

- *Revelation for You* by Tim Chester
- *Revelation Chapters 14-22* by J. Vernon McGee
- *Revelation: NIV Application Commentary* by Craig S. Keener

For Next Week

Memorize

⁶ Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying, Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty, reigns!

⁷ Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself.

-Revelation 19:6-7

Extended Commentary

Revelation 19:6-16

19:6-8 The praise of the vast multitude as a heavenly choir now heralds: (1) the coming reign of the Lord, and (2) the joyful marriage of the Lamb. The wife of the Lamb (Christ) is the church (Eph 5:31-32), those redeemed from all nations (Rv 5:9-10; 7:9) by his blood (1:5-6; 5:9-10). Since these descriptions are equally true of the vast multitude (7:9; 19:1,6) and the “heaven dwellers” (12:12; 13:6), it appears that there is a shift in imagery from the same group of people being portrayed as a choir to being the wife of the Lamb.

19:9 The fourth beatitude of the Apocalypse has a twist: If a person accepts the “invitation” and goes to the marriage feast of the Lamb, his faith will make him part of the wife (the church). It is called a “feast” because it endures, beginning on the evening of the wedding and continuing for days.

19:10 God’s people are prohibited from the worship of any being other than God (Ex 20:3-6). Nevertheless, overcome with awe, John fell at the feet of the angel to worship him. The angel immediately corrected him. The phrase the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy apparently means that all biblical prophecy either directly or indirectly testifies about Jesus, the Messiah (Lk 24:27,44-48; 1Pt 1:11-12).

19:11-13 John had previously seen heaven opened in 4:1. This rider on a white horse is not the same as the one in 6:2. He judges and makes war with justice, not in the boastful and blasphemous way that the beast does (13:5-7). This is why he is called Faithful and True. Many crowns shows that Christ has more power to rule than Satan (12:3) or the beast (13:1). A name . . . that no one knows except himself reminds readers that the Lord has not revealed everything about himself and his plan (Dt 29:29; see note at Rv 10:3-4). A robe dipped in blood looks backwards at Jesus’s redemptive death (7:9) and forward to his treading the winepress of God’s wrath (19:15; Is 63:1-6). In the Gospel of John (1:1,14), John began by referring to Jesus as the Word (Gk *logos*).

19:14 Since the armies accompanying the Lord are wearing pure white linen, as did the Lamb’s wife (v. 8), this is another image for the same group elsewhere called the “vast multitude” (vv. 1,6; 7:9) and the “heaven dwellers” (12:12; 13:6). White horses implies that Christ allows his people to participate in the climactic victory, as they later reign with him (20:6).

19:15-16 God’s word pictured as a sharp sword looks back to the description of the Son of Man in 1:13-16. Strike the nations is reminiscent of Ps 2:9. Rule . . . with an iron rod is the end-time fulfillment of what was predicted of the newborn Son in 12:5.¹

References

1. *CSB Study Bible: Christian Standard Bible*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017.