

Revelation 19-20: Overview for Bible Studies

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Ch19:

V1-10: What John Heard - Events in Heaven (v1,6 "I heard ..." 2x)

- **V1-5: Joy in Heaven as God is Worshipped**
- **V6-10: Joy in Heaven at the Marriage & Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

V11-21: What John Saw - Events on Earth (v11,17,19 "And I saw ..." 3x)

- **V11-16: Vision of Christ's Second Advent as the Warrior King**
- **V17-18: Supper of the Great God**
- **V19-21: Beast & False Prophet Cast into Lake of Fire**

Ch20:

What John Saw – The Millennium, Final Rebellion & Final Judgment

(v1,4,11,12 "And I saw ..." 4x)

V1-10: Thousand Years Millennial Period

- **V1-3: Satan Bound & Cast into Bottomless Pit**
- **V4-6: Saints Reigning With Christ & First Resurrection**
- **V7-9: Satan Loosed, Final Deception & Rebellion**
- **V10: Satan Cast into Lake of Fire**

V11-15: Great White Throne & Second Death

Revelation 22v8: **“And I John saw these things, and heard [them]. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things”**.

The series of things John **“had heard and seen”** is what we have presented in ch19-21:

- Ch19v1 **“And after these things I heard ...”**; v1-5 convey the thought of **APPRECIATION**, a heavenly company appreciating God’s righteous judgment of evil Babylon.
- Ch19v6 **“And I heard ...”**; v6-10 convey a scene of **CELEBRATION**, in view of the tremendous event of the marriage of the Lamb & then the marriage supper.
- Ch19v11 **“And I saw ...”**; v11-16 convey the thought of **MANIFESTATION**, as heaven is opened, and there is the appearing in glory of Christ, as He comes as the Warrior King.
- Ch19v17 **“And I saw ...”**; v17-18 describe a scene of **DEVASTATION**, as the fowls are called to gather unto the supper of the great God.
- Ch19v19 **“And I saw ...”**; v19-21 convey the thought of **RETRIBUTION**, as the beast & false prophet are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire.
- Ch20v1 **“And I saw ...”**; v1-3 convey the thought of **INCARCERATION**, as that old serpent, the devil, Satan, is taken and bound for 1000 years.
- Ch20v4 **“And I saw ...”**; v4-6 convey the thought of **VINDICATION**, for those saints who were martyred, but are part of the 1st resurrection, and they will live & reign with Christ for 1000 years.
- Ch20v7-10 convey the thought of a final **DECEPTION**, as Satan is loosed again for a final time, to deceive the nations globally, and God destroys this final **REBELLION**, and Satan is cast for ever into the lake of fire.
- Ch20v11 **“And I saw ...”**; v11 gives the thought of **DISSOLUTION**, as the earth & heaven fled away from Him who is seated upon that great white throne.
- Ch20v12 **“And I saw ...”**; v12-15 convey the thought of **CONDEMNATION**, as those books are opened and the dead stand before God and are judged according to their works.
- Ch21v1 **“And I saw ...”**; the whole of ch21 conveys the thought of **RESTITUTION**, as we read of a new heaven & a new earth, all things are made new for the eternal state & then the description of the millennial city.

Revelation 19v1-10: What John Heard - Events in Heaven (v1,6 "I heard ..." 2x)

- **V1-5: Joy in Heaven as God is Worshipped - APPRECIATION**
- **V6-10: Joy in Heaven at the Marriage of the Lamb & Marriage Supper - CELEBRATION**

V1: "And after these things ..."; links with events on earth at the close of the tribulation period (ch17-18). On earth, a scene of great sorrow, lamentation & bewailing at the ruin of Babylon; the cry 3x over is "Alas, Alas" (ch18v10,16,19). But in heaven, the response to Babylon's judgment & destruction is great joy (ch18v20) and repeated praise; the cry 4x over, from various sources, is "Alleluia" (v1,3,4,6), i.e. '*Praise ye the LORD*'.

John hears "a (single, collective) **great voice**", the united praise of "**much people** (a great multitude) **in heaven**", saints who are appreciating the saving grace and glory of God.

1st "Alleluia" linked with the divine glory of the God of salvation; "**Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God**".

V2: There is **APPRECIATION** of God's "**true and righteous**" judgment; He has righteously "**judged the great whore**", that did morally "**corrupt the earth**" with her wicked idolatrous system. God has now "**avenged the blood of His servants**" that died at the hand of Babylon (ch18v24).

Babylon is that system that has opposed God throughout the centuries; many servants of God have been put to death, and that will come to its fullness in the tribulation period. God has righteously moved to avenge all that have been martyred for the testimony of God and Christ.

V3: Further triumphant praise in heaven, as the smoke of Babylon's eternal destruction rises up from the earth "**for ever and ever**".

2nd "Alleluia" linked with this divine judgment. Today we praise God for His grace & salvation; we can also praise Him in anticipation of the day when He will move in righteous judgment & holy retribution, which also will display His glory & power.

V4: Further united praise & worship in heaven, as the 24 elders & 4 living creatures fall down before "**God that sat upon the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia**", giving their complete concurrence with what God has done in His judgment.

3rd "Alleluia" linked with the divine position; God is gloriously seated upon heaven's throne.

V5: A voice comes forth "**out of the throne**", calling for universal praise of God from all classes of people; (no.1) **all ye His servants**, (no.2) **and ye that fear Him**, (no.3) **both small and great**".

V6: John hears again the united singular voice of the “**great multitude**” of redeemed ones, in majestic irresistible character as “**many waters**” and “**mighty thunderings**”.

4th “**Alleluia**” linked with **divine purpose**, “**for the Lord** (Jehovah, the eternal One) **our God** (Elohim, the creator God) **the Almighty has taken to Himself kingly power**” (JND); heaven is acknowledging God’s absolute sovereign supremacy, and the imminent coming of the Christ who as King will display His kingly power & take to Himself His kingdom.

V7: Before He will take His kingdom, Christ as the Bridegroom will first take to Himself His bride, and there is joyful heavenly **CELEBRATION**; “**for the marriage of the Lamb is (fully) come**”.

God has dealt with the false bride, that apostate harlot church of Babylon; now is introduced the true Bride, the Lamb’s wife, the true Church which is the body of Christ, His fullness (Eph 1).

Here is when Christ & the complete Church are indissolubly & eternally united; Eph 5v27 “**That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish**”. Christ will delight to 1st privately present the Church to Himself, appreciating just what she is, all for His own personal joy & eternal pleasure.

It is “**the marriage of the Lamb**” & the Lamb’s wife, because He gave Himself sacrificially at Calvary & paid the price to secure His bride with His own precious blood.

“**His wife hath made herself ready**”; i.e. made ready at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

V8: The preparation means that “**to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousnesses** (plural, i.e. righteous acts) **of saints**”.

All that we do that displays Christ now in this world, will adorn the Church collectively on that coming day of presentation, when the bride will reflect the glory of the Lamb Himself.

V9: John is instructed to write of the blessing for those “**called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb**”, i.e. subsequent to the marriage itself, when Christ presents the Church all glorious to the invited guests, “**friends of the Bridegroom**” (John 3v29), OT saints & tribulation saints who will share in the Lamb’s joy at this mutual feast, probably continuing for the entire millennial period. John is assured of the veracity of these things, “**These are the true sayings of God**”.

V10: In response to all he has heard, John falls at the feet of the created angel to worship; but receives immediate prohibition, “**do it not ... worship God**”, for only deity is to be worshipped.

Then further explanation, “**for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy**”, i.e. the essence of all Bible prophecy is concerning what God has purposed for the Man Jesus and His glory.

Revelation 19v11-21: What John Saw - Events on Earth (v11,17,19 "I saw ..." 3x)

- **V11-16: Vision of Christ's Second Advent as the Warrior King - MANIFESTATION**
- **V17-18: Supper of the Great God - DEVASTATION**
- **V19-21: Beast & False Prophet Cast into Lake of Fire - RETRIBUTION**

V11: John "**saw heaven opened**", to reveal the Lord coming forth as the Warrior King, in all His kingly glory, seated upon "**a white horse**". The world now sees Him again for the 1st time since Calvary, and for the 1st time as a risen Man. He is coming as the Deliverer of His people, the Judge & Destroyer of all His enemies and to establish His glorious & righteous millennial reign. He is "**called Faithful and True**", depicting His perfect moral character; faithful to His God & true manward, as "**in righteousness He doth judge and make war**" against an ungodly wicked world.

V12: With the same discerning gaze as when He moved in the midst of the golden lampstands (Rev 1v14), "**His eyes were as a flame of fire**", as He now views with holy hatred all the unrighteousness & ungodliness of this wicked world that opposes Him. This shows clearly the principle that "**judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?**" (1st Peter 4v17).

John sees "**on His head were many crowns** (diadems, i.e. regal crowns)", consistent with the absolute authority & universal dominion of Him who is King of kings (see ch11v15).

"**He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself**", depicting His divine inscrutability. In keeping with deity, the high mysteries of His Person known only to Himself & God the Father.

V13: He is "**clothed with a vesture dipped in blood**", i.e. the blood of His enemies, the fulfillment of Isaiah 63v1-4, "**their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments**".

"**His name is called The Word of God**", depicting His divine authority to judge.

He is "**the Word**" (John 1) in relation to God, the expression of the mind of God.

He is "**the Word of life**" (1 John 1) in relation to believers, the expression of the life of God.

He is "**The Word of God**" in relation to the world, the expression of the judgment of God.

V14: He comes forth in all His power, accompanied by the armies of redeemed saints (see Jude v14), "**upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean**", adorned in those same garments as at the marriage of the Lamb (v8). We will share in His glorious manifestation (see Col 3v4) and we will display His glory to a wondering world (see 2nd Thess 1v10).

Clouds of angels will also accompany Him (see Matt 16v27, Matt 24v30, 1st Thess 1v7, Rev 1v7).

V15: “And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword”; His mouth will open to smite all who oppose Him, with the very power of His spoken word, and **“with the spirit of His mouth”** (2nd Thess 2v8). He is now displayed as the One with absolute power & authority, as He wields that unbending royal sceptre of authority, **“He shall rule them with a rod of iron”**, ruling with inflexible righteousness, yet it is also the rod of the Shepherd, as He will rule with shepherd care. **“He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”**; He comes as the divine Husbandman, moving in fierce crushing judgment & without mercy upon His enemies.

V16: “He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS”, depicting His supreme royal pre-eminence. He is the King who is over all kings, all made to give allegiance to Him; He is the Lord over all lords, all made to acknowledge His Lordship. This title written on His vesture depicts His royal character; and on His thigh depicts His divine strength, power & ability to accomplish the victory for God.

V17: Throughout the day of grace, there has been a salvation supper, with the gracious invite to all men, **“Come; for all things are now ready”** (Luke 14v17). Now that day of opportunity is over, and the invite given by the **“angel standing in the sun”** is to the flesh-eating fowls, **“Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God”** (see also Matt 24v28).

V18: Having spurned the invite to the salvation supper, **“the flesh”** (5x) of Christ-rejecting humanity will be food for the fowls at this judgment supper. This devastating scene, the aftermath of the carnage & destruction, is similar in description to the 6th seal judgment in ch6v15-17, with the greatest of men, **“kings”, “captains” & “mighty men”**, all equally humbled & rendered powerless.

V19: Human armies that were previously enemies are now united against Christ, **“gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army”** (see ch16v16).

V20: Divine & righteous retribution against the political power, **“the beast”**, and the religious power, **“the false prophet”** who supported the beast & promoted the worship of his image. Both are **“cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone”**; given no opportunity to repent, these 2 will be the first occupants of the place of eternal judgment.

V21: The One who at Calvary opened not His mouth, in this day of His manifestation & victory, He will annihilate all the opposing forces by the spoken word of His power (see 2nd Thess 2v8).

Revelation 20: What John Saw (4x) – The Millennium, Final Rebellion & Final Judgment

V1-10: Thousand Years Millennial Kingdom

Christ's kingdom on earth will be a literal **"thousand years"** (v2,3,4,5,6,7), i.e. His millennial reign.

- **V1-3: Satan Bound & Cast into Bottomless Pit - INCARCERATION**
- **V4-6: Saints Reigning With Christ & First Resurrection - VINDICATION**
- **V7-9: Satan Loosed, Final DECEPTION - REBELLION**
- **V10: Satan Cast into Lake of Fire - CONDEMNATION**

V1: An unidentified angel, possibly the angel that sounded the 5th trumpet (ch9v1), comes down from heaven, **"having the key of the bottomless pit (abyss) and a great chain in his hand"**. The key speaks symbolically of divine authority to open & close the abyss, a place for incarceration of evil spirits; the chain speaks symbolically of the power given to the angel to intern Satan.

The demons within the man of Gadara besought the Lord not to be dispatched into the abyss (Luke 8v31), not wanting to be tormented **"before the time"** (Matt 8v29). Clearly, when the devil is incarcerated in the abyss, his demons will also be there with him; just as they will be with him eternally in the **"everlasting fire, prepared for the devil & his angels"** (Matt 25v41).

V2: The impotence of the devil to resist is obvious, as the angel **"laid hold ... and bound him"**.

- 1) As **"the dragon"**, he is the fierce destroyer, the embodiment of cruelty.
- 2) As **"that old serpent"**, he is the subtle deceiver of Eden, the personification of guile.
- 3) As **"the Devil"**, diabolus, he is the accuser of the saints, the arch-tempter of men.
- 4) As **"Satan"**, he is the adversary, relentless in his opposition to all that is of God.

What a difference for this earth for 1000 years, when Christ will be manifestly present & Satan in all his evil ways, and all that these names & character imply, will be absent.

V3: The devil's **INCARCERATION** in the abyss is doubly secure, as the angel **"shut him up"**, and the abyss is **"sealed over him"** (JND), preventing his escape.

Deception has been his characteristic work throughout history, reaching its peak in the closing days, with effects upon the whole habitable world (ch12v9) and all nations (ch18v23). But he is now rendered inoperative, his ministry of deception is now completely curtailed, until the 1000 years are complete, and then in divine purpose he will be loosed again for **"a little season"**.

V4: Three categories of heavenly saints who enjoy **VINDICATION**, as they reign with Christ for the 1000 years.

- 1) Those seated on thrones, **"and judgment was given unto them"**, i.e. a company to whom is committed the governmental administration of the kingdom, including the church (see 1 Cor 6v2-3, 2 Tim 2v12, ch2v26, ch3v21).
- 2) Martyred saints of the 1st half of the tribulation, **"them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God"** (see ch6v9-11), now raised as part of the 1st resurrection, to go into the kingdom.
- 3) Martyred saints of the 2nd half of the tribulation, **"which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands"**, also now raised to reign with Christ.

V5: Those who are to participate with Christ in His reign, most will need to be raised out from among the dead, i.e. **“the first resurrection”**; **“they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life”** (John 5v29). They will not all be raised at exactly the same time; church saints, tribulation saints, OT saints, 1st Cor 15v23 **“But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming”**. There will be a 2nd resurrection of **“the rest of the dead”**, the unjust, at the end of the millennium, in view of the Great White Throne judgment, **“they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”** (John 5v29).

V6: The blessings for all who are raised as part of the 1st resurrection. In keeping with priestly activity & worship of God, their character is **“Blessed and holy”**, i.e. enjoying the presence of Christ & set apart to God. Those who have part in the 1st resurrection will be forever beyond the reach of the 2nd death, **“on such the second death hath no power”**. The 2nd death is for those described in ch21v8. Those who share in the future administration of His kingdom, as well as being seated on thrones, and sharing in His rule, will likewise also be a priestly worshipping people, serving as **“priests of God and of Christ”**. They **“shall reign with Him a thousand years”**, enjoying shared rule with Christ over the whole world, as He reigns from shore to shore, the Just One who will reign in righteousness over men (Isaiah 32v1). When He comes to reign, as the Son of Abraham, He will claim the land, as the Son of David, He will claim the throne, and as the Son of man He will claim the whole earth.

V7-8: After 1000 years, God allows for Satan to be **“loosed out of his prison”**, and he immediately goes around to stir up a final **DECEPTION & REBELLION** against God - Satan will never change; neither will the heart of man. Man has submitted to Christ for the 1000 years, but this final rebellion shows that it was not a willing submission on the part of many, and the devil musters an army as numberless **“as the sand of the sea”**. The evil one raises this rebellion from those of **“the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth”**; of those born during the millennium, for some there will be only feigned submission & obedience to Christ, and they remain essentially the enemies of Christ (see Psalm 66v3, Psalm 72v8-9). They will prefer to live on the fringe of millennial blessing, as far from the King & His centre at Jerusalem as possible; when Satan is released, they will happily follow him in overt rebellion against God & Christ. We read of **“Gog”** and the land of **“Magog”** in Ezekiel 38-39; a great company who come down from the north, moving in insurrection against the people of God, and who are judged by God.

V9: This army encompasses the camp of the earthly saints of the millennium and against **“the beloved city”** of Jerusalem, with its millennial temple, at the very centre of the earth. God will utterly destroy this final rebellion; **“fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them”** - a dreadful & unexpected & overwhelming judgment from a holy & righteous God.

V10: Satan's final **CONDEMNATION**, cast into the place of eternal burning, **“the lake of fire and brimstone”**, to join the beast & false prophet who have been there already for 1000 years. Clearly the lake of fire is not a place of annihilation; yet it is a place of eternal torment that knows no abatement, **“and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (for the ages of ages, JND)”**.

Revelation 20v11-15: Great White Throne & Second Death

The series of 7 final judgments at the close of Revelation:

- 1) ch17-18 - the judgment of Babylon
- 2) ch19v18 - the judgment of the earthly kings and their armies
- 3) ch19v20 - the judgment of the beast
- 4) ch19v20 - the judgment of the false prophet
- 5) ch20v9 - the judgment of Gog and Magog, the final rebellion
- 6) ch20v10 - the judgment of the devil
- 7) ch20v11-15 - the judgment of the ungodly dead**

This 7th final judgment opens the way for the eternal state to be ushered in (ch21v1-7).

- **V11: John sees a throne & the Throne sitter – a scene of DISSOLUTION**
- **V12-15: John sees the final judgment of unbelievers – a scene of CONDEMNATION**

V11: John sees this “**great white throne**”, and “**Him that sat on it**”, i.e. Christ, the Son of man; God the Father has committed all judgment to Him (see John 5v22,27, Acts 10v42, Rom 2v16).

It is a distinct throne from the throne of God in heaven (Rev 4) and the throne of His glory on earth (Matt 25); a real & literal throne of divine judgement that will be established temporarily. Christ, as Creator, will further display His creatorial power in bringing about the **DISSOLUTION** of the material universe; “**from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them**” (see Matt 24v35, Heb 1v12, 2nd Peter 3v10).

As a result, there will be no place of refuge or hiding place for sinners from the judgment throne. It is a judicial “**great white throne**”, ‘*The supreme court of the universe*’ (Jardine), a place of absolute authority and almighty power (see also Dan 7v9-10), before which a vast multitude will stand, “**the judgment of the great day**” (Jude v6), to be finally & eternally judged.

It is a righteous throne, “**white**” depicting the absolute divine purity & holiness & impartial righteousness of the One seated upon the throne.

V12: The last great final assize, the judgment of all the ungodly dead from the beginning of time who will “**stand before God**”, i.e. “**before the throne**” (RV), but they have no righteous standing or acceptance before God, and they are only there to be finally judged.

There will be the “**small and great**” of this world; none will be so small & insignificant that they will be overlooked, and none so great & influential that they can escape it by any means at all. At this judgment throne, there is impartiality, for God is no respecter of persons.

Individual persons will all equally be responsible & individually accountable to God.

This is “**the righteous judgment of God**” (Rom 2v5); God is as righteous in judgment as He is in redemption, and His judicial glory is displayed in this awesome scene.

Thus “**the books were opened ... and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works**”. The evidence accurate, infallible & beyond dispute; all judgement will be according to the wicked works committed by all during their lives. God is a meticulous Book-keeper (see Eccl 12v14, Matt 10v26, Matt 12v36, Romans 2v3).

The great catalogues of men’s sinful deeds will be brought before them, sinners will meet all their sins again, and then to be cast into the lake of fire.

Possibly the Bible, the Word of God, recording the words of Christ, will be opened also; John 12v48, “**He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day**”.

But also “**another book was opened, which is the book of life**”, giving the final corroboration of judgement (v15). There will be no believers or saved ones appearing at this great white throne.

V13: All unbelievers will be there, as “**the sea ... death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them**”; death which claimed the bodies of unbelievers, and Hades which claimed their souls, both deliver up all that they have. The bodies will be raised, reunited with souls, but only for judgement, and men will bodily stand before the throne to be judged.

Again, the righteousness of the judgment is emphasised; for a 2nd time “**they were judged every man according to their works**”. There will be degrees of judgment & punishment, dependent upon the wickedness of works committed; also more severe for those more privileged in life & who were given more light (see Luke 12v48, Matt 11v22/24).

All will know why they are eternally condemned, there will be no ground for defence or appeal.

V14: And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Death and hell are now emptied, and so are done away with; 1st Cor 15v26 “**The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death**”, being “**cast into the lake of fire**”, the place of eternal punishment. It will not be an annihilation, it will not be an extinction, but it will be eternal **CONDEMNATION**, an eternity of endless woe. This “**second death**” means eternal separation from God & Christ.

V15: If the name is not recorded in this “**book of life**”, there will be no 2nd chances to repent & believe; eternal issues are settled in time. Christians have their names recorded in heaven, in the Lamb’s book of life (see Luke 10v20, Phil 4v3, Heb 12v23).

Clearly there is no such thing as universalism, the flawed idea that ultimately all will be saved.