

The Return of Christ



15 in a series

Introduction

The 1967 movie “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner” is a classic film centring around an unexpected dinner guest. The story involves a young Caucasian woman and an African-American man who announce to each of their parents that they plan to marry. The acceptance of inter-racial relationships was a developing issue in the 1960’s and the film was an entertaining revelation of how attitudes were changing.

So what does this have to do with the book of Revelation? In this lesson, we are looking at Revelation chapter 19 where we are shown the glorious return of Jesus Christ and how two metaphorical “dinners” (or suppers) are featured. The first dinner is for all who have placed their faith in Christ and is a wonderful celebration attended by people from all ages of Earth’s history.

This dinner metaphor is depicted as a “wedding supper” with Christ is the groom and the church is His bride. Every individual believer is an invited and honoured guest.

The second dinner described in Revelation 19 is the opposite of a joyous celebration. It is a scene of utter destruction and death to those who have chosen to reject the grace of God.

At this moment in Revelation all people who have been born into this world will be attending one of these two symbolic “dinners”. Which dinner will you personally be attending? In the choice between the two dinners you don’t need to *guess*. The dinner you attend will be the one to which you have accepted an invitation. Now is the time to accept Christ’s invitation to you to attend the “Wedding Supper of the Lamb”.

Overview for Session #15

- 1. The Second Coming of Christ in the New Testament**
- 2. Hallelujah! God Reigns (Rev. 19:1-6)**
- 3. “The Wedding Supper” ... of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-10)**
- 4. Christ’s Second Coming in Revelation (Rev. 19:11-16)**
- 5. “The Worst Supper” ... of the Lost (Rev. 19:17-18)**

1. The Return of Christ in the New Testament

In our last lesson, we looked at the defeat of the end-time unholy trinity consisting of the Dragon, the Sea Beast and the False Prophet.

This coalition (with the support of governments) unite to lead the whole world astray and are referred to as the end-time Babylon. Satan works through Babylon employing a counterfeit strategy and is incredibly successful; economically, politically and also in terms of popular worldwide support.

However it all comes crashing down just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

We have alluded to Christ's Second Coming in our previous studies of Revelation but here in chapter 19 we see a fuller picture of this climactic event. It's important to point out that the Second Coming of Jesus is spoken of many times in other parts of the New Testament. John 14:1-3 is a good example:



John 14:1-3 *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

Here in John’s Gospel we see Jesus comforting the disciples with His promise to return and re-unite with His faithful followers and then take them to His Father’s house. Other parts of Scripture such as Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13, Luke chapter 21, speak of the Second Coming. In these chapters, Jesus outlines some of the ‘signs’ that are present on the Earth just prior to His Second Coming. The Apostle Paul also emphasised this great event in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and Hebrews 9:28.

In Titus 2:13 we see Jesus’ second coming referred to as *“The Blessed Hope”*.

Question 1: Why do you think the Second Coming of Jesus is called “The Blessed Hope”?

2. “Hallelujah! God Reigns” (Revelation 19:1-6)

Revelation 19:1-6 *After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Halleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! ²For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.” ³Again they said, “Halleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” ⁴And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Halleluia!” ⁵Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!”*

⁶And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunders, saying, “Halleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”

The word *“Hallelujah”* appears three times in these six verses. This biblical word is formed from two Hebrew words: i) *“Halal”* means to praise or to bless (it’s also an Arabic word with a similar meaning), and ii) *“Yah”* which means God - as in ‘Yahweh’ (e.g. Exodus 3:14). So the word *“Hallelujah”* essential means *“Praise God”*. This well-known religious expression appears in the New Testament only in the book of Revelation - chapter 19.

In verse 2 we see a judgment on God’s judgments - where it states that these judgments of God’s are ‘true and just’. This is the issue that goes to the heart of God’s character and fairness – and it’s on this issue we see the age-old battle between God

and the Devil. This battle is sometimes referred to as “The Great Controversy” (or “Cosmic Conflict”) and is described in detail in chapters 12 and 13 (see studies #7 & #8 in our series)

Also, the question of whether “God is worthy of our worship” or not is answered positively in the songs of Revelation chapters 4 and 5 as well as here in Revelation 19:2.

Question 2: Why do you think it's necessary to declare God's judgments as “true and just?” _____

In Revelation 19:2 we see an example of God’s “true and just” judgments with His condemnation of the great prostitute - which is apostate Christianity. Also in verse 2 we see an answer to the question first asked in Revelation 6:10 of when judgment would take place upon those who have oppressed and persecuted God’s people down through history.

Here we can see that any need for revenge is best given to God to handle. Notice what the Apostle Paul says:

Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.]

Question 3: Why is it better for us to not seek revenge on those who have wronged us?

In Revelation 19:6 we read – *“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Halleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”*



It is in this verse that we see a new phase of God's kingdom where He reigns unhindered by the darker forces of Satan for eternity. This new "phases" begins with the Second Coming of Christ and the destruction of end-time Babylon. In our present time this "unhindered" reign of God is not yet fully established because we await the blessed hope of the return of Christ.

Revelation chapter 19 is another prediction in the New Testament of the Second Coming of Christ. It precedes the chaining of Satan during the millennium (Revelation chapter 20) and finally the establishing of the New Jerusalem after the millennium (Revelation chapters 21-22).

3. The Wedding Supper... of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-10)

We will now continue with the story of the "two suppers" as seen in Revelation chapter 19. The first dinner is a "wedding supper" reserved for those who have chosen Christ as their Lord and Saviour (Rev. 17:7-10). In the other dinner (or "the worst supper" that we'll read about a little later in the chapter) the birds are invited to feast on the flesh of those who have rejected Christ and chosen Babylon and her corruptions. The theme of these "supper" metaphors is to show that at the Second Coming of Christ there will only be two categories of people: i. those faithful to Christ and His commandments, and ii. those who are corrupted by Babylon and reject the biblical truth.

Revelation 19:7-10 ⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." ¹⁰And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Question 4: How can we be sure we will be invited to this 'Marriage Supper of the Lamb'? _____

The Second Coming of Christ is described metaphorically as a wedding - with Jesus as the groom and the church as His bride.

Jesus also used this marriage metaphor to describe the church. (see Mark 2:19, Matthew 22:1-14, 25:1-13, Revelation 12:1 and Revelation 14:4.)

Christ's relationship with His followers reads like an ancient eastern wedding which is still practised in some parts of the world today. Let's look at the characteristics of a wedding as Jesus would have known it:

In a biblical wedding:

1. A payment (or “dowry”) is paid by the bridegroom for the privilege of marrying the bride.
2. During the engagement period prior to the wedding ceremony, the groom returns to his family home to prepare a place for the soon-to-be-married couple to live.
3. During the engagement the bride prepares herself for the wedding.
4. All contact and discussions between the groom and bride are through a third-party “mediator”.
5. The groom then returns to collect his bride and they are married which - is followed by a marriage meal.
6. The bride and groom then return to live in the family home that the groom has prepared.

Let’s look at how this wedding custom plays out in the New Testament:

1. In 1 Corinthians 7:23 it says we are bought with a price. **This is Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and is likened to the dowry paid for a bride.**
2. **Christ - being the “groom” returned to His Father’s home after the Cross** to prepare a place for his church (see John 14:2)
3. The church (or **bride**) **is preparing herself and is always ready for Jesus’ Second Coming** (Revelation 19:7, John 14:15, Matthew 25:13).
4. All contact and discussion between the groom and bride is through **a third party mediator. This is the role of the Holy Spirit.** (See John 14:16-17, John 14:26, Acts 1:7-8)
5. The groom then returns to collect his bride and they are married which is followed by a marriage meal. **This equates with Christ marrying the church and the celebration is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb** (See Revelation 19 and John 14:3)
6. The bride and groom then return to live in the family home that the groom has prepared. **This is when Christ’s church comes to the Father’s home where Christ has prepared a place for His followers – and we all live eternally** (See Revelation 21 and 22 & John 14:3-4)

This is the ultimate love story. Revelation chapter 19 is a continuation of the experience of God and His people moving toward the wonderful wedding at Christ’s Second Coming. Do you personally want to be part of this celebration? Christ has given you the invitation. All you have to do is accept it.

In Revelation 19, God’s people are known collectively as the bride but are also known individually as the guests. All people in the world are given an invitation to accept God’s grace through the death of Jesus Christ.

Question 6: Do you wish to accept Christ’s invitation to this “Wedding Supper”? _____

4. The Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:11-16)

Revelation 19:11-16 *11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***



At the beginning of Revelation chapter 19 John hears amazing things from heaven. Now he not only hears but sees the most glorious event of Earth's history in the magnificent and glorious Second Coming of Jesus.

How do we know this figure in Revelation 19 is Jesus?

- ❖ He is called "Faithful and True" - compare this with Revelation 3:14
- ❖ His eyes are like blazing fire - compare with Revelation 1:14.
- ❖ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood - this is a description of the Messiah in Isaiah 63:1-3
- ❖ His name is the Word of God - compare with John 1:1-5
- ❖ Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword- compare with the description of Jesus in Revelation 1:16
- ❖ He will rule them with an iron sceptre - The description of Jesus in Revelation 2:27 and 12:5 is a fulfilment of the Messianic prophecy in Psalm 2:9.
- ❖ And finally, the figure's robe and thigh has the description of Jesus given in Revelation 17:14

Hallelujah! Christ is coming indeed!

5. The Worst Supper...of the Lost (Rev. 19:17-18)

Let's now look at the other dinner - 'the worst supper'. This supper predicts the destruction of those who have chosen to follow Babylon rather than Christ and His biblical truth.

Revelation 19:17-18 *17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."*

This imagery is drawn from a vision in the Old Testament. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of judgment regarding the pagan nation of Gog. Here he saw God's victory symbolically portrayed as a sacrificial feast prepared for the birds of the air (see Ezekiel 39:17-22).

The invitation in Revelation chapter 19 for the birds to take part in this macabre feast of those who have rejected Christ is in sharp contrast to the invitation to the faithful to participate in the "Wedding Supper of the Lamb".

It's important to highlight that the description of the lost (i.e. those who've rejected Christ's invitation) in Rev. 19:18 is a similar description to those in Revelation 13:16 who have received the "mark of the beast", and also the lost in Revelation 6:15-16 people who are afraid at Christ's return.

Question 7: How do you think we can we avoid being part of this Worst Supper?

If we accept Christ's gracious invitation to be a guest at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb then our place at Christ's table is secured. If we don't make a decision - or if we choose rebellion against God - then we are actually choosing everlasting destruction. Make sure you give your allegiance and love to Christ - He wants you to be saved forever. Jesus has left the choice to you.

Question 8: Which "supper" of Revelation chapter 19 do you choose to be at?: _____