

# The Two Suppers of God

The Wedding and the War

**Revelation 19:1** After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,

<sup>2</sup> for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

<sup>3</sup> Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."

<sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

<sup>5</sup> And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."

<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

<sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"-- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

<sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

<sup>10</sup> Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

<sup>12</sup> His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

<sup>13</sup> He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

<sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

<sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

<sup>17</sup> Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God,

<sup>18</sup> to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."

<sup>19</sup> And I saw the **beast** and the **kings** of the earth with their **armies** gathered to **make war** against him who was **sitting on the horse** and against his army.

<sup>20</sup> And the **beast was captured**, and with it **the false prophet** who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These **two were thrown alive** into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

<sup>21</sup> And **the rest were slain** by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was **sitting on the horse**, and all the birds were **gorged with their flesh**.

(Rev. 19:1-21)

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## Two Great Banquets

As Revelation can be read as the story of **two different women**, so it can also be read as the story of two different

feasts. In fact, the women are *each* related to *both* feasts. Let's talk about them. The Scripture knows two covenantal banquets. There are **royal wedding banquets** and **banquets that celebrate a victorious war and peace**.

The **wedding banquet** is the easiest to understand, covenantally, because a marriage between a man and a woman is a covenant. Malachi is explicit about this saying, “**She is your companion and your wife by covenant**” (**Mal 2:14**). So is Ezekiel, “**When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age of love ... I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you ... and you became mine**” (**Ezek 16:7**). Wedding banquets happen throughout the Scriptures. **Laban** made a great feast when giving his daughter Leah to Jacob (**Gen 29:22**). **Samson** held a feast before his marriage to his wife (**Jdg 14:10**). **Jesus and Mary** attended the feast of some unknown bride and bridegroom at Cana in Galilee (**John 2:1-11**). Since marriage is a covenant, we can call this marriage banquet **the covenant ceremony meal**.

Similarly, covenants meals often take place in the context of **treaties and wars**. **Melchizedek and Abram** have “**bread and wine**” after the mighty victories of **Genesis 14**. Right after this, Abram gives Melchizedek a tenth of all that he has,

demonstrating his inferiority in the relationship and his loyalty to the covenant arrangement. Laban and Jacob “ate” together as they made a “covenant,” a political alliance between their two families (Gen 31:44-46). The people of Gibeon tried to get a step ahead of Joshua and his armies and so came to him “bread” and “wineskins” to make a “covenant” of peace with these marauders invading the land of Canaan (Josh 9:12-15). The meals were a binding ceremony between new friends.

Revelation 19 may be read against the backdrop of these two kinds of covenant meals. It begins with a marriage banquet and ends with a (albeit gruesome) war banquet. These two meals are diametrical opposites, two ends of two very different paths that two very different women travel. And yet, we will see that they are similar and overlap. They are meant to be read together. They are meant to work together so that the appeal of the one is shown to be more glorious through the grisly nature of the other, and a possible reading that looks beyond the death. In them, there is a call and a warning echoed in a parable of Jesus, “Come to the wedding feast” or else “bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness” where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

# Revelation 19: Context and Structure

Revelation 19 is [the last](#) of three chapters that make up [the sixth cycle](#) of Revelation. As the last, I believe it is to be read to at least some degree, as taking place at [the end](#) of the cycle. To put that another way, while the totality of these three chapters deals with events that take place throughout the First and Second Comings of Christ, the events depicted here showcase more of the end than the beginning. Something is being consummated in both meals and consummation is the end of the betrothal period.

The chapter has a certain [link back to Revelation 1](#) in that John is falling down at the feet of someone giving him a great vision in both chapters.

- A. Vision of Jesus, 1:12–16
- [B. John falls at Jesus's feet, 1:17a](#)
- C. Command to "Write," 1:19**
- C.' Command to "Write," 19:9**
- [B'. John falls at angel's feet, 19:10](#)
- A'. Vision of Jesus, 19:11–16<sup>1</sup>

The chapter also has very important [links to chapter 20](#), that we will look at [much more closely in a couple of weeks](#):

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<sup>1</sup> [Peter J. Leithart](#), *Revelation*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, vol. 2, The International Theological Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018), 247–248.

- A. Celebration in heaven, 19:1–10
- B. Heaven opens, and rider on white horse, 19:11–16
- C. Angel in the sun invites birds to feast on corpses, 19:17–18
- D. The beast and kings thrown into lake of fire, 19:19–21**
- C'. Angel with chain to bind Satan, 20:1–3
- B'. Martyrs reign for a millennium, 20:4–10
- A'. Great white throne, 20:11–15<sup>2</sup>

Or,

- A. Beast, false prophet, cast into lake of fire (19:19-21)
- B. “Come down from heaven” (20:1)
- C. Satan bound 1000 years (2-3)
- D. “They lived and reigned with Christ 1000 years” (4)
- E. “Until the thousand years were finished” (5)**
- D'. “... and shall reign with him a thousand years” (6)
- C'. When 1000 years are finished, Satan shall be loosed (7-8)
- B'. Fire “came down ... out of heaven” (9)
- A'. Devil cast into lake of fire where Beast and false prophet are (10)<sup>3</sup>

Or more broadly,

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Judgment of the harlot (Revelation 17:1-19:6)</li> <li>B. The Divine Judge (Revelation 19:11-16)</li> <li>C. Judgment of the Beast and False Prophet (Revelation 19:17-21; cf. Ezekiel 39)</li> <li><b>D. Satan imprisoned for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3)</b></li> <li><b>D'. The Saints reign/judge for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4-6)</b></li> <li>C'. Judgment of Gog and Magog (Revelation 20:7-10; cf. Ezekiel 38-39)</li> <li>B'. The Divine Judge (Revelation 20:11-15)</li> <li>A'. Vindication of the Bride (Revelation 21:1-22:5; cf. Revelation 19:7-9)<sup>4</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Harlot, 17:1–18</li> <li>B. Mourning for Babylon, 18:1–24</li> <li>C. Rejoicing in heaven, 19:1–10</li> <li><b>D. Heaven opened: rider on horse, 19:11–21</b></li> <li>C'. Saints sit to judge, 20:1–10</li> <li>B'. Great white throne, 20:11–15</li> <li>A'. Revelation of the bride, 21:1–8<sup>5</sup></li> </ul> |
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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>3</sup> Isaac Brown, “Revelation 19:19-20:10,” *Biblical Chiasm Exchange* (Dec 21, 2016), <https://www.chiasmusxchange.com/2016/12/21/revelation-1919-2010/>.

<sup>4</sup> G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 983.

<sup>5</sup> Leithart, 2:166.

And even,

- A. Dragon (12:3)
- B. Sea-Beast (13:1)
- C. Earth-Beast = False Prophet (13:11)
- D. Babylon (14:8)
- E. Beast-Worshippers (14:9)**
- E<sup>1</sup>. Beast-Worshippers (16:2)**
- D<sup>1</sup>. Babylon (16:19)
- C<sup>1</sup>. Earth-Beast = False Prophet (19:20)
- B<sup>1</sup>. Sea-Beast (19:20)
- A<sup>1</sup>. Dragon (20:2)<sup>6</sup>

The fact that these chapters are chiastically structured together, it seems to me, further **blows apart the notion that they are to be viewed strictly chronologically**. But like I said, we will save that discussion for a later time.

Today, I'm only concerned with **ch. 19** itself. It has its **own paralleling internal dual structure**, where at both centers we have, in typical Revelation fashion, **the worship of God!** This fits very well with the two suppers.

- |                                                         |                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. Glory and honor belong to the Lord our God (19:1)    | A. The Lamb and his Bride, supper (7b-9a)                                         |
| B. He has judged the great harlot (2-3)                 | B. True sayings of God (9b)                                                       |
| C. 24 elders and 4 living creatures: Amen! Alleluia (4) | C. Testimony of Jesus (10a)                                                       |
| <b>D. Praise God and his servants (5)</b>               | <b>D. Worship God! (10b)</b>                                                      |
| C <sup>1</sup> . Great multitude: Alleluia! (6a)        | C <sup>1</sup> . Testimony of Jesus (10c)                                         |
| B <sup>1</sup> . The Lord God Omnipotent reigns (6b)    | B <sup>1</sup> . Spirit of prophecy (10d)                                         |
| A <sup>1</sup> . Give Him glory (7a)                    | A <sup>1</sup> . The King and his armies, anti-supper (11-16; 17-21) <sup>7</sup> |

<sup>6</sup> **Kenneth A. Strand**, "Chiastic Structure and Some Motifs in the Book of Revelation," *AUSS* 16.2 (1978): 403, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/232862857.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Modified from **Christine Smith**, "Revelation 19," *A Little Perspective* (Dec 26, 2016), <https://www.alittleperspective.com/revelation-19-2016/>.

Divine liturgy dominates the first structure, while the two suppers with their center on worship dominate the second. In this way, formal worship is to be viewed as the focus of both halves of the chapter. In other words, when we come to interpret the more difficult pieces of the chapter, as they often have been, our thoughts when pondering the images must be taken upwards to the formal worship of God. This is a strange notion for many who come to this chapter, because in it, all they usually see is a great final battle just before the millennium. That battle is almost always discussed in a great vacuum that knows little to nothing about how it relates to the worship of Jesus Christ. I hope to rectify that today.

Though there is a lot more going on here, some of which we will look at in more detail next time, today I want to keep our study of it as simple as I can. We will look at the two halves not according to the chiasms, but according to the banquets. First we will think about the wedding feast; second we will think about the war-feast. Perhaps the following simplified outline can help you grasp ahead of time what we will be doing:

**First Half (Rev 19:1-9)**

- A. Heavenly Declarations  
Worshiping Christ (1-8)
- B. The Wedding Supper of  
the Lamb (9)

**Second Half (Rev 10-21)**

- Declaration:  
X. "Worship God"  
(10)
- A. The Word of God Rules  
(11-16)
- B. The Great War Supper of  
God (17-21)



# The Wedding Feast.

As we look at [the wedding feast](#), I want to point out another interesting chiasm; this one goes back to the last few verses of chapter 18. They provide a necessary backdrop. Revelation 18:23 says, among other things, that “[the voice of the bridegroom and bride will be heard in you \[Babylon\] no more.](#)” This is the outer level of a structure that ends in 19:7-9 where a new Bride and Groom are introduced: The Lamb of God and his Bride, the church.

- A. [The bridegroom and the bride](#) will be heard in you no more (18:23)
- B. Glory and honor belong to the Lord our God (19:1)
- C. He has judged the great harlot (2-3)
- D. 24 elders and 4 living creatures: Amen! Alleluia (4)
- E. Praise God and his servants (5)**
- D<sup>1</sup>. Great multitude: Alleluia! (6a)
- C<sup>1</sup>. The Lord God Omnipotent reigns (6b)
- B<sup>1</sup>. Give Him glory (7a)
- A<sup>1</sup>. [The Lamb and his Bride](#): supper (7b-9a)

In this, we therefore also see [the two women contrasted](#). [The first](#), who thought herself a queen and not a widow is silenced; nevermore shall she marry and make music and be happy. This is because she drank the bloody anti-communion cup of the wine of the saints, whom she had persecuted and martyred. But somehow, those saints are now viewed as alive and ready to be married to an eternal God in a wedding feast

that puts all others to shame. This wedding feast contrasts with no more wedding, and this is the second woman.

But this necessitates a question. **How can a woman who has been murdered** to become a sacrifice for the harlot and the kings of the earth now **be alive to become the bride of Christ?** The answer begins in **Revelation 19:1** in the first of five rapid-fire Hallelujahs which parallel the five songs of the heavenly throne room of chs. 4-5.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. 4 Living Creatures: Holy Holy Holy (4:8)                          | A. Great Multitude: Hallelujah!                                          |
| B. 24 Elders: Worthy Creator (11)                                    | Salvation/judgment (19:1-2)                                              |
| <b>C. 4 Living Creatures &amp; 24 elders: Worthy Savior (5:9-10)</b> | B. Great Multitude: Hallelujah! Smoke (3)                                |
| B <sup>1</sup> . Myriads of Angels: Worthy Lamb (5:12)               | <b>C. 24 elders and 4 living creatures: Amen! Hallelujah (4)</b>         |
| A <sup>1</sup> . Every Creature: Father and Lamb--King (13)          | B <sup>1</sup> . A voice: Praise our God, fear him (5)                   |
|                                                                      | A <sup>1</sup> . Great Multitude: Hallelujah! King-Wedding of Lamb (6-7) |

“After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants’” (**Rev 19:1-2**).

How can they be alive? God has **saved** them, or to put it in terms of life and death, he has resurrected or **regenerated** her. This occurs in the story after he judged the great

prostitute. This reminds me of a different salvation idea: ransom or exodus. He called his people out of Babylon, the place of demons and unclean animals, the place of death. He called them to life. He has the power to do so. His is the Glory in doing so. For in the parallel song, he is Holy, Holy, Holy—totally other than his Creation.

Their salvation is contrasted in [the second song](#) with a particular feature of Babylon's demise. But it is no ordinary death. It is a sacrifice. [“Once more they cried out. ‘Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever’ \(3\).](#) Just as the death is a dual image of a [woman and a city](#), so the smoke is a dual picture of [hell and liturgy](#). Her smoke goes up forever. This is parallel to [Rev 14:8-11](#) where [“Babylon the Great”](#) is tormented with [“fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever.”](#) It is a heavenly temple scene where sacrifices take place. But it is a picture of torment and torture as we get in revelations about Hades. [Keep all this in mind for later.](#)

[The third song](#) is sung by the four living creatures and the four elders, exactly as the third song of Revelation 4-5 is. In the earlier song, they proclaim that the Lamb is a worthy Savior. Now, they sing the very short, [“Amen. Hallelujah”](#)

(19:4), meaning “So be it” and “Praise Yahweh.” It is an affirmation that the LORD’s judgments are good and right.

The fourth song is the only one that uses *aineō*, “praise,” rather than *allēlouia* (Gk for the Hebrew הַלְלוּ־יָהּ or *halelu-yah*, but it means the same thing (the word with *Theos* sometimes translates this Hebrew phrase; cf. 1Chr 23:5 LXX). “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great” (Rev 19:5). It is the saints who fear God, as opposed to the world which has no fear of him at all. The verse gives four identifying terms for those who praise: servants, those who fear, small, and great. “Four” may indicate that these servants come from the four corners of the earth who all hear this same singular voice (“from the throne came a voice”).

Then, as if on cue, “I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out...” (6). They sang the fifth and final song, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” (19:6-8). And so we come to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. There

are several things I want to look at as we come to this climactic ending of the first (literary) half of the chapter.

**First**, we have moved from **anticipation to fulfillment** between the first five songs and these last five songs. While God was already Almighty and reigning, while the Lamb was even there resurrected and standing as though slain, now he has opened the seals, the trumpets have been blown, the bowls and judgments have been poured out. The first of the great villains of the book is fallen (the harlot), the rest are soon to follow.

**Second**, John adds one explanation that he wants us to see. “**For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints**” (8b). The bride is dressed in righteous deeds. But these did not save her. This is **not her intrinsic righteousness**, for this same bride is many who had come out of Babylon—harlots just like Rahab. No, she bares no intrinsic righteousness of her own. Her righteousness is an **alien righteousness**, the righteousness of Christ, the Word of God (vs. 13). Christ has washed his bride by his word, in his word, first justifying her (1Co 6:11; Titus 3:5, 7), then sanctifying her (Eph 5:26; cf. Ps 51:2).

What do these words mean? **Justification** is that central doctrine recovered in the Reformation. It does not mean to be made righteous, but to be **declared righteous**. It is a legal

reckoning. But how could a sinner, someone who has fallen short of God's glory, ever be declared righteous by the heavenly court? By **grace alone**, through **faith alone**, because of **Christ alone**. This is the Gospel. **Jesus Christ** alone paid the penalty of death that your sins deserve so that the law might be upheld and justice satisfied. He was no more guilty than you are innocent. The saints cannot do this work themselves. Jesus' death is no mere example to follow. Rather, by **faith alone** you believe that God offers you forgiveness, newness, life eternal, happiness, hope, joy, and fellowship with himself because it pleases him to do so through the death and life of the risen Savior. But this comes by the **grace of God alone**, God who decided in long ages past that the Messiah would obey the law and die anyway, so that sinners might be forgiven through his sacrifice. Are you hearing what is being said? They believe what he has done for you.

The other word, **sanctification**, are the clean clothes that we receive each time the word washes over us, healing us of recent sins, cleaning us of fresh filth, showing us that this once-for-all justification does not leave us in the same condition, but transforms us moment by moment into the image of Christ himself. We are not left to ourselves. God gives us his Spirit who sends his fruit. Therefore, works are

*the necessary fruit* of justification. God clothes his new virgin bride in the garments of righteous works so that she is a pleasing and desirable creature that all men look at and admire.

Third, I want to offer a corrective to some bad theology out there. Sometimes Dispensationalists have taught that the church marries Christ, which is correct. But they also say that God the Father married Israel in the OT. Larkin said, “We must not forget that there are ‘Two Brides’ mentioned in the Scriptures. One in the Old Testament, and the other in the New. The one in the Old Testament is Israel, the Bride of Jehovah; the one in the New Testament is the Church, the Bride of Christ.”<sup>8</sup> This is one of those tremendously damaging doctrines that come because people have not rightly understood Christ in the OT. I want to spend a moment thinking about Israel’s relationship to Yahweh in the OT.

Isaiah and Jeremiah tell us that God “divorced” Israel (*Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8*). To be divorced, one must first be married (*Isa 54:5*). In the Bible, there are stages of marriage: The betrothal, the exchange of vows, the ceremony and feast, the

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<sup>8</sup> Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation: A Study of the Last Prophetic Book of Holy Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1919), 168.

**consummation**. We can see these stages between God and Israel play over the course of history.<sup>9</sup>

**The Betrothal** seems to take place with Abram, though it is also clear that prior to him, God had entered into covenants with his ancestors. The LORD said to Abram, “**Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.**” This is the language of leaving and cleaving. But who is approaching Abram this way? The visible Word of God (**Gen 15:1**), **Christ**, and the two are formally bound together in a covenant, as he swears a one-sided oath to bless Abram. In ch. 17, the covenant is cut in the sign of circumcision, where Abraham who had already trusted God by faith (**15:6**), now agrees to carry out this sign on his spiritual offspring.

**The ceremony** of this wedding takes many years to arrive. God first brings his people into Egypt, where they are given over to the darkness of the Pharaoh. It is as if God has given Israel over to a Satanic foster-father. Moses and Aaron then enter the picture as two witnesses to negotiate with the father

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<sup>9</sup> Two internet posts were helpful in me forming my ideas here. The first is by **Wayne Bedwell**, “God’s Marriages With Israel,” *Studiesintheword.org* (2012), [http://www.studiesintheword.org/gods\\_marriages\\_with\\_israel.htm](http://www.studiesintheword.org/gods_marriages_with_israel.htm). Unfortunately, Bedwell seems to belong to a Unitarian or Arian sect. Nevertheless, on the main points of this particular argument, I thought it was pretty solid. The other is from a Reformed Baptist **Colin D. Smith**, “Did God Divorce Israel But Not Judah?” *colindsmith.com* (June 30, 2019), <https://www.colindsmith.com/blog/2019/06/30/did-god-divorce-israel-but-not-judah/>.



of the bride for her release. After the plagues, Pharaoh is so eager to get rid of Israel that he pays the bride price himself, the LORD steals his bride away, out of the adopted house of slavery, as they plunder the Egyptians. As they are approaching Mt. Sinai, God suddenly invites Moses, Aaron and his sons, and seventy elders of Israel to come up to the mountain and **eat with him** (Ex 24:9-11) in the divine council. This is the Wedding Feast! And again, **they “saw” God** (10), because *Christ is Yahweh*.

It comes immediately on the heels of **the vows**. God has said, “**If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**” (Ex 19:5-6). *Recall that the same “kingdom of priests and holy nation” has been spoken of the church in Revelation*. Israel hears the terms of the covenant, and swears back, “**All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do**” (24:3; 7). The vows have been exchanged.

**The consummation** takes many more years, because Israel immediately breaks covenant with God as it goes after the golden calf and commits spiritual adultery. Forty years they will have to wait. But eventually, the promises of the land are given and the **fullness of the physical blessings** told to

Abraham were realized (“Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass;” Josh 21:45). The Angel, like a King riding a white horse went before them and fought for them as they entered the land. They conquered. They had offspring. They had Christ himself. Christ married Israel.

When we come to the prophets, we find some curious language. God divorces Israel. But this is said during the time when Israel is now *divided*: Israel in the North and Judah in the south. God is only said to have divorced *Israel*. In fact, in Jeremiah’s treatment, he is speaking to Judah about how unfaithful Israel was that God divorced her, yet she is worse. But the incredible thing is, we never hear that God divorces Judah. The same language of “sending her away” into captivity might imply it. But it never says it. If this is true, it means that when Jesus came, the LORD was still married to Judah (which is now called “Israel” by the time of the NT).

This puts us into a strange situation where God both has and has not divorced his people. He divorced the northern kingdom, but not the south. He sent both away, yet returned many back to the Promised Land. Like Hosea, he took her back. This was the difficult situation those like Ezra and Nehemiah and the prophets of their day had to deal with.

Then there was silence from the prophets for 400 years. But something happens when Jesus arrives, something that begins to clarify the situation.

This leads to a **fourth** thing I want to discuss. Jesus gives us a very important parable about all this in Matthew 22. It is worth reading in full:

<sup>1</sup> And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying,

<sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son,

<sup>3</sup> and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

<sup>4</sup> Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’

<sup>5</sup> But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business,

<sup>6</sup> while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

<sup>7</sup> The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

<sup>8</sup> Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.’

<sup>9</sup> Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.'

<sup>10</sup> And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup> But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.

<sup>12</sup> And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

<sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

<sup>14</sup> For many are called, but few are chosen."

(Matt 22:1-14)

Jesus is obviously the Groom. But he is starting to distinguish for us more than one Israel. This is precisely what our paradox of being married yet not married implies on the physical level. The word about a wedding is going out but many ignore it and don't care. They should have. They could have come. The Pharisees knew this referred to them, which is why the next passage immediately says they went to figure out how to trap him in his words (vs. 15).

But since no one is coming to the wedding, a different group of people are invited. They are chosen to come and are

given appropriate dress for the celebration. But someone gets in who is not dressed, which causes the King to become indignant and he cast the man out into outer darkness. It is an image of hell that reminds us of that of Babylon's fall. Again, [the Pharisees](#). Revelation 19 bears a lot of similarities to our story. We have hell, we have a wedding, we have wedding clothing, we have Jesus the Groom. The difference is that [the guests are the Bride!](#)

What has happened is that we have the [one and same husband in both Testaments—Christ](#). He took the physical nation. But that physical nation itself became split. This was a picture of two Israels, one natural and the other *supernatural*, which is how the NT clearly describes it. The bride of Christ in the NT is the same bride as in the OT—it is those *spiritually* bound to Christ through faith—Abraham, Moses, David. But the physical, that which is only outward, with no true spirituality because it has no Eternal Spirit of God, this is cast off, divorced, sent away, destroyed. This idea leads us to the second feast.

## The War Feast

Let's move to the end of Revelation 19. We will [skip a detailed exegesis of vv. 11-16](#). I will note as an overview that

it parallels the five songs in that it shows us in a new and magnificent light the one being worshiped in those songs. This is the White Rider, the Word of God, mounted and ready for war, for he is the Divine Warrior—Christ the King, the Groom of the Bride. We pick up our story in vs. 17. “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, ‘Come, gather for the great supper of God...’” This is the parallel to the wedding supper.

Beale notices that “This angel has an appearance similar to that of the angel in 18:1, who came down from heaven, illumining the earth with his glory. Both angels bring judgments associated with birds: saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God” (cf. 18:2).”<sup>10</sup> I told you back there that this other Angel must be Christ. Therefore, this one most likely is too.<sup>11</sup> This is simply a matter of good literature working. Christ on his war steed was in “heaven” (11), and now from heaven as the Messenger (Angel) he calls out clothed in the sun. He is about to finish his work. That work concludes in another supper. It is the war supper, a ghoulish feast fit only

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<sup>10</sup> G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 415.

<sup>11</sup> This poses no problem to the created angel of vs. 10 that John is tempted to worship, because there are many heavenly beings in this chapter.

for carrion, scavenger, flesh-eating birds. This comes from both vv. 17, “he called all the birds ... come, gather for the great supper of God to eat the flesh,” and 21, “all the birds were gorged with their flesh,” and this shows you that we have entered into **one last chiasm** in the chapter, one that will help us interpret what we are seeing properly:

- A. Gather for the great supper of God, to “eat the flesh” of kings... (17-18)
- B. Beast, **kings, armies** make war against him who is “**sitting on the horse**” (19)
- C. **Beast and false prophet** captured (20a)
- D. **Who had deceived those who received the mark and worshiped its image (20b)**
- C<sup>1</sup>. **These two** were thrown alive into the lake of fire (20c)
- B<sup>1</sup>. **The rest were** slain by the sword of him “**sitting on the horse**” (21a)
- A<sup>1</sup>. (Supper) **The birds were gorged** “**with their flesh**” (21b)

How does this (and the other) structure(s) help us? There are several things to see. **First, birds, gorging with their flesh** concludes what was introduced in the fall of Babylon, that it will become a **haunt of unclean birds (18:2)**. In other words, we are still in the fall of *Babylon*! This is not some new war, but the final manifestation of her demise in this cycle.

**Second**, everything that takes place in **vv. 18-20** is **part of the supper**. The supper envelops those verses like the courses of a meal make up the full dinner. What do these teach us? The “supper of God” is for the birds to feast on the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses and riders, indeed all men—slave and free. It appears that there are six groups with

the sixth subdivided into two. **Six** is the number of man, appropriate for man's demise. **Eight** is the number of newness, the octave. And if "all men" is subdivided into two then we get **seven**: the number of completion.

Six (A)	Six (B)	Seven	Eight
Kings	Kings	Kings	Kings
Captains	Captains	Captains	Captains
Mighty Men ( <i>gibborim</i> in Heb)	Mighty Men	Mighty Men	Mighty Men
Horses	Horses and Riders	Horses	Horses
Riders	All men, that is Free and	Riders	Riders
All men	Slave	All men, that is Free and	All men
		Slave	Free
			Slave

The point is, all are being consumed by the birds. They have perished in the War of the Lamb.

How did this happen? The Beast and the kings of the earth muster all their armies together to make war against the one sitting on the horse and against his army (19). Importantly, this language is taken from **Ezekiel 39** and the prophecy against **Gog and Magog**, the end times foes that show up again in **ch. 20**. "Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: 'Assemble ... to the sacrifice I am preparing for you ... You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth'" (**Ezek 39:17–20**). I'll say much more about this **in coming weeks**.



The attempt to overthrow the Rider and his Army, that is Christ and his Church, has **never been successful**—and it **will not be** even in a last-ditch assault. The **Beast** and **False Prophet** are captured. God takes the world's governments and military industrial complex and together with its false prophet—its message and messenger that mimics Christ and the Trinity as a counterfeit, a very clever and difficult to spot forgery to those who do not know the LORD God—and throws them into **the lake of fire** that burns with sulphur. That's hell imagery again. The center of this is that these Satanic creatures of the Dragon, Satan, have **deceived those** who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. Therefore, these evil creatures are punished, alive, in the fires of hell. All who are slain by the sword that comes from the mouth of the White Rider have their flesh eaten up by the birds. Hence, the chapter and unit and cycle ends.

Therefore, if this is the fall of Babylon, then these things happen, literally speaking, **at the same time as the wedding supper** (indeed, they become the meal) ... again in the ultimate and final sense at the very end of them all. We've seen that all three images have types that exist throughout the NT age (even back into the OT age, see Daniel 4, etc.). But their last manifestation will see their doom happen together.

**Third**, this again helps us see that the events in this chapter are **not chronological**, but theological. Yes, there is a chronology to history. There is a First Coming. There is a Second Coming. There is evil throughout that goes in cycles of horror and peace but which gets worse just before the end, but this has to be understood theologically. God and his Christ are **Omnipotent** over the destruction of all the evil. Indeed, read together with the Wedding Supper, this War Supper must be seen through the theological lenses of worship and liturgy. Both are **God's covenant meals**. This one is eaten after the death of his enemies by the birds in unclean places. But that in turn becomes the war-element of the Wedding Supper of a God who has stolen away his bride from the clutches of the enemy, defeated that monster and its many heads, and declared his everlasting love for her. The Wedding Supper and the War Supper are One!

A note about **the meaning of this War Supper** and the **ghoulish imagery** is appropriate now. Without question, this is a picture of **judgment**. That's the point of the beast and false prophet being thrown into the lake of fire alive. However, the rest are eaten by the birds. To be more specific, *their flesh* is eaten by the birds ("flesh," *sarx*, appears 6 times in our passage). This, too, would appear to be judgment. Indeed, it

would appear to be *punishment*. However, something more may be going on here.

The key to this possibility is to note how those slain are killed. They are not killed with the literal sword of steel, but with a metaphorical sword that came from the mouth of the White Rider. In the description of the Rider, among other things we find his name: The Word of God. A sword coming from his mouth and the Word of God as a title are essentially linked together. In other words, this last-days army is dying because of the *Words* of Christ. Therefore, we can inquire into a very old interpretation of this passage that comes from the Early Fathers.

We do not have many early commentaries on Revelation, but many of them seem to interpret this the same way. Very curiously, Bede says, “At all times the church eats the flesh of her enemies. While she is consumed by them, she will however be filled at the resurrection when their carnal works are punished.”<sup>12</sup> Caesarius of Arles suggested something similar, “When all nations are incorporated in the church, they are spiritually devoured. Indeed, those who have been devoured by the devil become the body of the devil, while

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<sup>12</sup> Bede quoting Tyconius on Rev 19:20-21 in Victorinus of Petovium et al., *Latin Commentaries on Revelation*, ed. William C. Weinrich, Thomas C. Oden, and Gerald L. Bray, trans. William C. Weinrich, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2011), 177.

those who have been received by the church are made to be members of Christ.”<sup>13</sup> And Andrew of Caesarea notes that this is the “supper of God,” and says the eating of flesh means “the destruction of everything fleshly and the end of kings and rulers on the earth.”<sup>14</sup>

What’s going on here? Seeing that the Word of God kills them, they seem to be interpreting their death a physical death, but not a *spiritual* death. Hence, notice the list of our 6, 7, or 8 (above). All of the focus is on the “flesh.” Paul says “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom” (1Cor 15:50). And so, as Leithart suggests, working off this early interpretation, perhaps the removal of flesh may have a positive result, especially considering what had just occurred in Ezekiel immediately prior to the Gog-Magog prophecy. He writes, “The birds may be the Lord’s agents to strip fleshliness from kings, rulers, mighty men, soldiers, and commoners so that they can walk in newness of life. By the sword of the Spirit, the Word strips off the flesh and leaves the ground strewn with fleshless bones, prompting Yahweh’s question to Ezekiel: Can these bones live?”<sup>15</sup> The birds are

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<sup>13</sup> Caesarius of Arles, *Exposition on the Apocalypse* 19:17-18, in William C. Weinrich, *Revelation*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture NT 12 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 317.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 19:17-18. In Weinrich, 317. All three are quoted in Leithart, 2:290.

<sup>15</sup> Leithart, 2:289.

carrying the flesh up to heaven in a similar way that smoke of a sacrifice rises up. Curiously, this interpretation seems to fit rather well as an interpretation of [the Feast of Booths](#) whereon Israel was to [sacrifice seventy bulls](#) which represented the seventy nations deceived by the seventy sons of God at the Tower of Babel.<sup>16</sup> In other words, God is making a way for many who are deceived [to be saved](#) through the stripping off of all their self-righteousness, which becomes a sacrifice pleasing to God. This interpretation does not diminish the punishment (which we will see in greater fulfillment in ch. 20)—many are slain by the law and never rise again. But there is gospel here too, and God saves many through it. This allows us to see better how the two suppers might go together, which clearly, they are meant to do.

## The Last Supper

As terrifying and glorious as this all is, as interesting as it is to speculate about the fulfillment of these things ([preterism](#) sees these suppers taking place in the First Century,

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<sup>16</sup> On the seventy bulls and the seventy nations see [Noga Ayali-Darshan](#), “The Seventy Bulls Sacrificed at Sukkot (Num 29:12-34) in Light of a Ritual Text from Emar (Emar 6, 373),” *Vetus Testamentum* 65.1 (2015): 9-19. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/43894218?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3Ad42365230c01dc507926967dcbae1aa6&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/43894218?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3Ad42365230c01dc507926967dcbae1aa6&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents). P. 10 has a nice chart breaking down how we get the number “70.”

historicism see it throughout the church age, futurism in the Battle of Armageddon, idealism sees all of these),<sup>17</sup> the fact is, God has given to his people a way to taste the future Supper now, for while this chapter showcases more the end than the beginning of the cycle, it is *because of the beginning* that the end even makes sense. In fact, the beginning and ending are linked together through another supper, the one that is often called “The Last Supper.”

The Last Supper, also called Communion or the Eucharist (“to give thanks”), is one of two great sacraments (mysteries) that God continues to give to his NT Bride in the present age. It is tremendously important, along with Baptism, for signaling to our hearts the power of the Gospel signified in *both suppers*. Perhaps neither supper is properly understood as often as they should be by Christians when they take Communion.

Our focus is often singularly put on the actual event of the sacrifice of Jesus—and rightly so. “This is my body ... This is my blood” take our minds there. In fact, John forces us to think this way if we understand the parallel in his Gospel. Again, right where it should be, we find in the description of the Rider, “On His outer garment ... a name

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<sup>17</sup> See Steve Gregg (ed.), *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 440-54.

was written, ‘King of kings and Lord of Lords...’<sup>18</sup> (Rev 19:16). This parallels what Pilate put on Jesus’ cross. “Pilate wrote a title ... it is written, ‘Jesus is Nazareth. The King of the Jews’” (John 19:19) and “when they crucified Jesus, they took His outer garments ...” (23).

But as Jesus was going through his great ordeal and passion, he was actually waging a war. That war was first and foremost upon the three great threats that all humans face. He waged the war against sin, which threatens to send every human being into those fires of hell, because sin is our own attack and hatred on the God who made us. Sin is our rebellion against God and his law, be it the grossest or the what we think of as the most mild. Perjury in a court or a white lie, murdering our brother or hatred in our heart, committing adultery or lusting, disobeying God or our parents—all sin is an attack on God. For it, we deserve death. But Jesus took away that needed punishment by dying in our place so that the one who trusts in him need not perish eternally because of their sin. Jesus won that war at the cross.

As you can hear, the second great foe, death is also being attacked by Jesus in these moments. First, he underwent the fullness sins consequences. He died. Not because he deserved

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<sup>18</sup> The inverse parallels with John and Revelation show us the same king language and we will look at this next time.

to—he is the only human who has not. He died as a substitute in our place, so that if he died, we do not have to. But he overcame death in a way no one else has of their own power. He rose from the grave, alive evermore. The resurrection is our great hope that death has no power over the followers of Christ, because in it, Jesus conquered Death and Hades.

The third foe he conquered was **Satan**. This is made clear in that between time, while he was bodily dead, but spiritually always alive. What did Jesus' spirit do when his body lay buried in the tomb? It was not sleeping. No, Jesus went to the same place that all spirits go upon death. He crossed over into Hades itself, but not as a helpless prisoner. Rather, he burst open the very gates of hell and demanded that the enemy release the prisoners so long held there—that is the saints of old who were kept in Abraham's bosom until the time of their release, when the legal reasons Satan could keep them there were torn up at the death of Messiah. In this, Jesus overcame the power of Abaddon, Apollyon, Satan, Leviathan, and all the demonic host under their control. Satan was legally defeated. This is why you must understand the Last Supper as a War Supper, cut in the covenant blood of Jesus himself. He has ended the horrors once-for-all to anyone who comes and eats with him.



- M. 3:16. Vomit you out of my mouth (138)
- N. 3:20. I will sup with him (134)
  - O. 4:1. I saw and behold, a door was opened in heaven (131)
    - P. 4.4. 24 elders, sitting clothed in white/crowns on heads (128)
      - Q. 4:9. Living creatures give glory to him (123)
        - R. 4:10-5:1. 24 elders fall down/God sits on throne/worship (120-22)
          - YY. 12:9. Dragon/serpent/devil/Satan thrown down who deceives world
          - YY<sup>1</sup>. 12:10. Salvation/power/kingdom/authority of God and Christ ... accuser is thrown down
  - R<sup>1</sup>. 19:4. 24 elders fell down/worshiped God who sits on the throne (120)
  - Q<sup>1</sup>. 19:7. Let us give glory to him (123)
  - P<sup>1</sup>. 19:11-13. A white horse. He who sat on it/head of diadems/clothed with robe (127-29)
  - O<sup>1</sup>. 19:11. Behold, I saw heaven opened (129)
- N<sup>1</sup>. 19:17. The supper of the great God (133)
- M<sup>1</sup>. 19:21. Killed with the sword out of the mouth of God (137)

Is this not what he told the churches in the chiastic parallel in Revelation 3? “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev 3:20). This is not parallel to the Wedding of the Lamb, but to the Supper of God, with both verses 133 and 134 verses from the center of the book respectively (see chart below). “The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me ...” (3:21). Conquering is war.

The other supper is also reflected in the Last Supper, for both of the suppers in Revelation 19 are “the last supper.” The wedding of the Lamb occurs because God’s people have been saved from sin, death, and the devil. They have been brought out of Babylon, be it the wicked worldly Jerusalem (Jews) or any other fallen city of man (Gentiles). The deception cast over our eyes has been undone; we have seen

the Light. We have come to the end of ourselves; we have “[died to Christ](#),” so that we might live with him. And so we look forward to the Wedding of the Lamb in the Lord’s Supper.

This is reflected in [the inverse parallel](#) of our passage in the early parts of John’s Gospel. “[Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding](#)” ([Rev 19:9](#)). “[Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding](#)” ([John 2:2](#)). It is a supper of bread and a supper of wine. “[He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty](#)” ([Rev 19:15](#)). “[When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come’](#)” ([Jn 2:3-4](#)). What time? His death. His resurrection. The war banquet. The wedding banquet. It’s all here in the Last Supper that we partake in each time we gather to renew the covenant with God.

These two covenant meals bring [the consummation](#) of the end of the age. But that consummation was [inaugurated](#) in the Betrothal of the First Coming of Jesus Christ when he invited many to the wedding feast, none came, so he invited those who were not originally guests. You may dine at this feast with Christ as his bride. If you would, heed in the

invitation. Come to the wedding of the Lamb and the marriage of the Bride of Christ. But do not come on your own terms in your own clothing and righteousness, for you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked (Rev 3:17). Turn to Jesus, repent of your sins, ask him to forgive you, be clothed in the new clothing of his perfect righteousness through faith alone. In this you will obey the very center of Chapter 19 and the words of the created angel who would not take worship to himself, but rather told John, “Worship God” (19:10).

The Wedding in Cana	The Wedding of the Lamb
<p>2:2 “Jesus and His disciples were <b>invited to the wedding</b>”</p> <p>2:3 Jesus makes wine. “When they ran out of <b>wine</b>, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no <b>wine</b>.’ ”</p>	<p>19:9 “Blessed are those who are <b>invited to the wedding</b>”</p> <p>19:15 Jesus makes wine. “He treads the winepress of the <b>wine</b> of the rage of the wrath of Almighty God.”</p>
<p>19:19 “Pilate <b>wrote</b> a title ... it was <b>written</b>, ‘JESUS OF NAZARETH. THE <b>KING</b> OF THE JEWS.’ ”</p>	<p>19:16 “On His outer garment ... a name was <b>written</b>, ‘<b>KING OF KINGS</b> AND LORD OF LORDS’ ”</p>
<p>19:23 “when they crucified Jesus, they took His <b>outer garments</b>”</p>	<p>19:16 “On his <b>outer garment</b> ... a name was written, ‘<b>KING OF KINGS</b>’ ”</p>

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