



REVELATION

FOLLOWING THE WAY OF THE LAMB

Study 16 *Promise & Warning* Revelation 19

Dwelling in the Word

Prayerfully read through Revelation 19 and ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you? 3) How could you respond to God in this passage?

Digging Deeper

1. Reflecting on how some of the visions in Revelation are meant to reassure followers of the Lamb to stay the course of persistent faithfulness, while others are designed to repel people from sin and its consequences, do you find that some resonate with you more? Why?
2. In Revelation 19:1-9 we have another glimpse into heavenly worship where we hear a great multitude shouting “Hallelujah” to God. What are some of the things the heavenly chorus praised God for? If you were writing a song of praise to God, what would you include in your thanksgiving for the acts of God in your own life?
3. John uses the metaphor of a wedding to describe Christ’s coming to receive his followers (19:7, 9). Our present engagement (betrothal) to Christ will be followed by the wedding feast of the Lamb when he returns. Other biblical passages make similar analogies (Hosea 2; Isaiah 62; Mark 2:18-20; John 3:29; Ephesians 5:25-32); how is marriage a good image for our complete unity with Christ? How does engagement (or betrothal) describe our present relationship to Christ?
4. What are the “righteous acts of the saints” (19:8)? What is the relationship of such good works to the free gift of salvation?
5. In the description of the rider on the white horse (19:11-16), two parts stand out: the robe dipped in blood (19:13; see Isaiah 63:1-3) and the sword coming from his mouth (19:15; see 1:16; 2:12, 16; cf. Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17). How do you understand the symbolic meaning of these images? What did you think about the view that in contrast to the warrior in Isaiah, Jesus comes to the battle with his own blood staining his robe, since his sacrificial death on the cross has been the path to victory? (see 12:11) How does this explanation shift the meaning of the image for you?
6. The (almost) final battle isn’t much of a battle, as Jesus summarily defeats the beasts and consigns them to the lake of fire (19:17-21). What does this say about the ultimate victory of God over evil?

For Groups

1. Chapter 19 starts off with a celebration. Start your time together by sharing a special celebration that you have experienced. If you are able to this week, have a celebratory meal with your group. Bring your favourite foods to share and celebrate doing life with one another.
2. Hallelujah (lit. “Praise Yah[weh]”) is a word that we often find in Psalms and modern songs of praise to worship God and celebrate God’s goodness. It is an expression of joy that is often used around the Easter season. Do you have a favourite praise song that contains the word, “Hallelujah”? Why is that song significant for you?

Living it Out

Eugene Peterson refers to the frequent calls to faithful perseverance throughout the book of Revelation as “the daily valour of dogged obedience, sacrificial love, and alert endurance.” What practical steps can you take this week to persevere in your faithful following of the Lamb?



PROMISE & WARNING

Revelation 19
March 10, 2024 | Tyler Williams

PROMISE & WARNING

Promise visions assure followers of the Lamb to stay the course of persistent faithfulness.

Warning visions are designed to repel people from sin and its consequences.



Both serve the same end, that the reader perseveres in faith.

PROMISE & WARNING

Promise: Three Hallelujahs Praising God (19:1-9)

Warning: The (Almost) Last Battle (19:10-21)

PROMISE (19:1-10)

Three Hallelujahs Praising God

- Looks back to God's just judgement on Babylon, one of the "destroyers of the earth" (11:18).
- Looks forward to the wedding feast of the Lamb (19:7, 9).



PROMISE (19:1-10)

- “Hallelujah” (Gk. “allelujah” αλληλουια) — from Hebrew הללויהה = “Praise Yah[weh]” = “Praise the LORD.”
- The three “Hallelujahs!” (19:1, 3, 6) contrast with the three “Woes” (18:10, 16, 19).



PROMISE (19:1-10)

The Great Multitude Praises God for his Past Acts of Salvation (19:1-3).

- God’s judgments are true and just.
- God judged Babylon who “destroyed” the earth.
- God brought justice because of “the blood of God’s servants” (see 6:10).



PROMISE (19:1-10)

A Renewed Call to Praise (19:4-5).

- The 24 elders and the four living creatures joined in the praise: “Amen, Hallelujah!” (19:4).
- Then we hear from the throne itself: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!” (19:5).



PROMISE (19:1-10)

The Great Multitude Praises God for Future acts of Salvation (19:6-9).

- The Wedding of the Lamb (19:7, 9).
- “His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen... was *given* her to wear”, and stands for “the righteous acts of God’s holy people” (19:8).
- “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” (19:9).



WARNING (19:11-21)

A Rider on a White Horse (19:11-16).

- “Faithful and true” (19:11; cf. 3:14).
- “Eyes like blazing fire” (19:12; cf. 1:14; 2:18).
- “On his head are many crowns/diadems” (19:12).



WARNING (19:11-21)

- Dressed in a robe “dipped in blood” *before* any battle happens – likely his own blood (19:13).
- “Sharp sword” coming from mouth – not a literal sword, but a metaphor for the cutting, searing Word of God (19:15; cf. 1:16; 2:12, 16; cf. Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17).



WARNING (19:11-21)

The Rider is Named

- “The Word of God” (19:13; cf. John 1).
- Secret name inscribed (on his forehead?) “that no one knows but he himself” (19:12; cf. 2:17).
- Later disclosed on his robe and thigh: “King of kings and Lord of lords” (19:16; cf. 17:14).



WARNING (19:11-21)

The (Almost) Last Battle (19:17-21).

- Battle was also anticipated earlier (in 9:13-19; 14:17-20; and 16:12-16 called “Armageddon”), and is only finished in when Satan is also thrown into the lake of fire (20:8-10).
- The Battle is between the Rider and the heavenly army (19:14; 19) and the beasts and the “kings of the earth and their armies” (19:19-20).



WARNING (19:11-21)

This “battle” is like no other battle that has ever been fought, or will be fought, by human armies!

- Single weapon: The sword of the Word of God.
- Single warrior: Jesus.
- No real battle is described.
- There was no question about the outcome.



WARNING (19:11-21)

The “great supper” of God

- Before the battle, carrion birds are invited to feast on the flesh of the victims at “the great supper of God”(19:17-18); while after the battle “all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh” (19:21).
- What do we do with such gruesome images of violence?



REVELATION'S VIOLENT IMAGERY

The unrelenting violent images in Revelation not only overwhelm our minds and imaginations, the theological problem is also compounded because the source of the violence is God and the Lamb.



REVELATION'S VIOLENT IMAGERY

The traditional imagery of apocalyptic terror is transformed by the cross of Jesus.

- We've seen this already in the reconfiguration of the Lion of Judah as the Lamb that was slain in Rev 4-5.
- The lion image is *recast and replaced* by the image of the Lamb that was slain.



REVELATION'S VIOLENT IMAGERY

“This is the polar opposite of the meaning of the text of Revelation, in which the lion image is reinterpreted and replaced by the Lamb. It represents a retrogression from a Christian understanding of the meaning of Messiahship to the pre-Christian apocalyptic idea.”... Crucifixion “is the definitive act which stamps its character on the identity of the Christ, and thus definitive for the identity of God. Love was not a provisional strategy of the earthly Jesus, to be eventually replaced by transcendent, eschatological violence when ‘they’ve had their chance’ and love has not ‘worked’” (Eugene Boring, *Revelation*, 109).



REVELATION'S VIOLENT IMAGERY

- Now the description of Jesus in 19:13, recasts the image of the divine warrior in Isaiah 63:1-3.
- In contrast to the warrior in Isaiah (the source of the image), Jesus *comes* to the battle with his own blood staining his robe, since his sacrificial death has been the path to victory.
- Jesus shed his blood out of love (1:5) to deliver a people of every nation from sin (1:5-6; 5:9).



REVELATION'S VIOLENT IMAGERY

- The (albeit violent) images in Revelation are creative ways of saying that the way of the cross will be successful.
- The God who, disarmed the powers through the cross, will indeed triumph! (Col 2:15)



RESPONSE

Call to Faithfulness

- Makes an analogy between Christian discipleship and betrothal.
- Faith binds his followers to the Lamb. We need to resist idolatry and accommodation and be faithful to the Lamb.



RESPONSE

Call to Persevere

“One of the unintended and unhappy consequences of St. John’s Armageddon vision is that it has inflamed the imaginations of the biblically illiterate into consuming endtime fantasies, distracting them from ***the daily valour of dogged obedience, sacrificial love, and alert endurance***” (Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, 165).



RESPONSE

Call to Worship

- God identifies himself as the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The Son is revealed as “the Lamb who was slain,” to whom also the Spirit bears witness (“For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus,” 19:10).