

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“Rejoice, for the Marriage of the Lamb has come!” (Revelation 18.20-19.10)



Review of Revelation 18.1-19

1. Revelation 17.1-19.10 is an expansion of the 6th and 7th bowls (Rev 16.12-21)
2. “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great!” (18.1-3; cf. Isaiah 13-14, 21, 23, 34, 46-47; Jeremiah 50-51; Ezekiel 26-28)
 - a. A haunt of demons; idolatry and economic injustice
3. “Come out of her, my people” (18.4-8; cf. Gen 19; Jer 51.5-10, 35-45)
4. “Alas! Alas!”: Kings, merchants, and shipmasters lament the fall of Babylon (18.9-19)
 - a. Luxurious cargo and economic collapse (cf. Ezek 26-28)

5. Bernard of Clairvaux on the wandering circle of consumerism:

It is natural for a man to desire what he reckons better than that which he has already, and be satisfied with nothing which lacks that special quality which he misses. Thus, if it is for her beauty that he loves his wife, he will cast longing eyes after a fairer woman. If he is clad in a rich garment, he will covet a costlier one; and no matter how rich he may be he will envy a man richer than himself. Do we not see people every day, endowed with vast estates, who keep on joining field to field, dreaming of wider boundaries for their lands? Those who dwell in palaces are ever adding house to house, continually building up and tearing down, remodelling and changing. Men in high places are driven by insatiable ambition to clutch at still greater prizes. And nowhere is there any final satisfaction, because nothing there can be defined as absolutely the best or highest. But it is natural that nothing should content a man's desires but the very best, as he reckons it. Is it not, then, mad folly always to be craving for things which can never quiet our longings, much less satisfy them? No matter how many such things one has, he is always lusting after what he has not; never at peace, he sighs for new possessions. Discontented, he spends himself in fruitless toil, and finds only weariness in the evanescent and unreal pleasures of the world. In his greediness, he counts all that he has clutched as nothing in comparison with what is beyond his grasp, and loses all pleasure in his actual possessions by longing after what he has not, yet covets. No man can ever hope to own all things. Even the little one does possess is got only with toil and is held in fear; since each is certain to lose what he hath when God's day, appointed though unrevealed, shall come. But the perverted will struggles towards the ultimate good by devious ways, yearning after satisfaction, yet led astray by vanity and deceived by wickedness. Ah, if you wish to attain to the consummation of all desire, so that nothing unfulfilled will be left, why weary yourself with fruitless efforts, running hither and thither, only to die long before the goal is reached? It is so that these impious ones wander in a circle, longing after something to gratify their yearnings, yet madly rejecting that which alone can bring them to their desired end, not by exhaustion but by attainment. They wear themselves out in vain travail, without reaching their blessed consummation, because they delight in creatures, not in the Creator. (*On Loving God* VII.18-19)

Revelation 18.20-19.10

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;²² and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more,²³ and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

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,² 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."

³ Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"⁵ And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great."⁶ 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.⁷ 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;⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"-- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.⁹ 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."¹⁰ 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.

1. “Rejoice over her!” (Rev 18.20-21)

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!”²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;²² and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more,²³ and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.”

a. “Rejoice over her”

- i. prophetic typology remains operative (cf. Rev 18.21, 24 and Jer 51.48-49)

Jeremiah 51:48-49 Then the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, shall sing for joy over Babylon, for the destroyers shall come against them out of the north, declares the LORD. ⁴⁹ Babylon must fall for the slain of Israel, just as for Babylon have fallen the slain of all the earth.

- ii. Heaven’s eternal rejoicing is the last word, despite the earth’s temporal rejoicing (cf. Rev 11.10)

b. The mighty angel and the millstone (cf. Jer 51.63-64; Ezek 26.12, 21; Neh 9.11; Matt 18.4-7)

Jeremiah 51:63-64 When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, ⁶⁴ and say, “Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.”

Nehemiah 9:11 And you divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and you cast their pursuers into the depths, as a stone into mighty waters.

- i. “found no more” (v.21) because blood of saints was “found in her” (v.24)
- ii. vindication of suffering witness (cf. three appearances of the mighty angel)

Revelation 5:2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”

Revelation 10:1 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.

Revelation 18:21, 24 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more ... And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth”

- c. economic reversal (*lex talionis*): means of production taken from saints (Rev 2.9; 13.6-7) is now taken from Babylon (no craftsman, mill, etc.)
- d. no music or wedding celebrations (cf. 19.7-10: eschatological wedding)

e. reasons for judgment

i. “for your merchants were the great ones of the earth” (18.23)

Isaiah 23:8-9 Who has purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth? ⁹ The LORD of hosts has purposed it, to defile the pompous pride of all glory, to dishonor all the honored of the earth. (cf. Ezek 26.5, 9)

ii. “all nations were deceived by your sorcery” (18.23) (note connection between sorcery and idolatry)

Revelation 9:20-21 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk, ²¹ nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. (cf. Rev 21.8; 22.15; Is 47.8-10)

iii. “in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth” (18.24)

Nahum 3:1-4 Woe to the bloody city, all full of lies and plunder – no end to the prey! ² The crack of the whip, and rumble of the wheel, galloping horse and bounding chariot! ³ Horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end – they stumble over the bodies! ⁴ And all for the countless whorings of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betrays nations with her whorings, and peoples with her charms.

2 Kings 9:7 And you shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, so that I may avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD.

2. Hallelujah! (All heaven breaks loose!)(19.1-5)

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, ² 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.” ³ Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.” ⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” ⁵ And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”

a. Revelation 19.1-10 is the flowering of the bud of Revelation 11.15-18:

Revelation 11:15-18 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. ¹⁸ The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.”

- b. Answered Prayer: “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”

Revelation 6:-11 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. (cf. Ps 79.10)

- c. “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.” (contra *Roma aeterna*)

Isaiah 34:9 And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and her soil into sulfur; her land shall become burning pitch. ¹⁰ Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever.

- d. “Fear him!” (19.5)

Isaiah 11:1-4 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

3. “The Marriage of the Lamb” (19.6-10)

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. ⁷ 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; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ 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.” ¹⁰ 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.

- a. The Marriage of the Lamb (Is 54.4-7; 61.10-62.5; Ezek 16; Hosea 2; John’s Gospel)

Isaiah 54:4-7 “Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. ⁵ For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. ⁶ For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. ⁷ For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you.

Isaiah 61:10-62:5 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

62:1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. ² The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³ You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴ You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵ For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

Hosea 2:14-20 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵ And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ "And in that day, declares the LORD, you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.' ¹⁷ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. ¹⁸ And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. ¹⁹ And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

- b. The Wedding Dress: "his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." (19.7b-8)

Revelation 3:4 Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Isaiah 61:10-62:5 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Hosea 2.19-20 And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰ I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

Ephesians 2.8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

- c. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19.9; cf. Rev 12.17: bride and guests = the woman and her offspring)
- d. The snare of idolatry: 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." (19.10a; cf. Rev 22.8-9)
- e. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev 19.10b)