

REVELATION CHAPTER 19

THE CELEBRATION OF VICTORY IN HEAVEN AND THE FINAL BATTLE ON EARTH

PART 1. Revelation 19:1-10. THE CELEBRATION OF VICTORY IN HEAVEN.

(1) Explanation of symbols.

The angels in heaven rejoice over the fact that all opposition against God in Christ and against Christians has been quenched forever! In their praise they express the justice of God's eternal punishment of the godless and wicked kingdom of the world with its antichristian, godless and wicked culture (19:1-3). Everyone in heaven agrees with this (19:4-5). All the believers exhort one another to joy because the wedding of the Lamb has come (19:6-8). The wedding of the Lamb is a picture of the Triumphant Church after Christ's second coming and about to take her place in the new heaven on the new earth (cf. 21:1-3,9-10).

19:1 After this I heard (*Greek: akouo*)(*aorist*) what sounded like the roar of a great (*Greek: pollus*) multitude (*Greek: ochlos*) in heaven. The phrase 'after this' is used to introduce a new vision (cf. 4:1; 7:1; 18:1; 19:1). It expresses that John saw this present vision "in time after" the vision before this one, "next" in the order of his visions. It does not express that the events seen in this present vision are chronologically after the events described in the previous vision!

John is on the earth and hears singing in heaven. This is probably the singing of the angels in heaven.

shouting (*present*) 'Hallelujah! Salvation (*Greek: soteria*) and glory and power (*Greek: dunamis*) (belong) to our God. The word 'Hallelujah' means 'praise the Lord' (cf. 4:11; 7:12; 12:10). God has now completed and made complete the salvation of his people. Nothing hides his glory anymore and nothing resists his power anymore!

19:2 for true (*Greek: alethinos*) and just (*Greek: dikaios*) (are) his judgements (*Greek: krisis*), because he has *once for all time* condemned (*Greek: krino*)(*aorist*) the great prostitute (*Greek: porne*) who corrupted (*Greek: phtheiro*) (*imperfect*) the earth by her adulteries (*Greek: porneia*). God's judgements always meet the absolute standards of truth and justice (cf. 15:3; 16:7; Luke 12:47-48; Romans 2:12-16). God's judgement is the proclamation of his verdict. The guilty know that they are guilty while they still live on earth. Their conscience and God's revealed Word already condemns them on earth. The verdict is already determined and their condemnation is already fixed before the day of judgement (John 3:18,36). But the verdict and punishment will be publicly pronounced on the final judgement day. Everyone in all history will then know what the guilty have done and that God's judgement is absolutely fair and just! After life on this present world there will be no second chance for anyone to be saved!

and he has *once for all time* avenged (*Greek: ekdikeo*)(*aorist*) the blood of his servants from her hand. And God's final judgement includes the execution of his punishment. The believers that have suffered and died under the persecution call unto God to avenge their blood (6:10). But man may never avenge himself, not even for reasons of personal honour, family honour or religious honour, because revenge is solely God's prerogative (Romans 12:19)! At Christ's second coming he and he alone will avenge the blood of his servants.

In the final judgement of the prostitute (Satan's kingdom of the world with its antichristian, godless and evil culture and its seductions) God will once for all time condemn her and avenge on her the blood of his servants.

19:3 And a second time (*Greek: deuteron*) they shouted (*Greek: lego, ero, eipon, eireka*)(*perfect*): 'Hallelujah! And the smoke (*Greek: kapnos*) from her goes up (*Greek: anabaino*)(*present*) for ever and ever.

Smoke (cf. 14:11; 18:8-9,18) is a visible sign of burning and here a symbol of the burning of hell. The angels in heaven know that the smoke of the prostitute's burning will go up for ever and ever (cf. Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). God's eternal punishment breaks forever the prostitute's rebellion and destruction on earth! Indeed – Praise the Lord! This is a great encouragement for Christians!

19:4 And the twenty-four elders (*Greek: presbuteros*) and the four living creatures (*Greek: zoe*) fell down (*Greek: pipto*)(*aorist*) and worshipped (*Greek: proskuneo*)(*aorist*) God who was seated (*Greek: kathizo*)(*present*) on the throne, saying (*present*): Amen, Hallelujah! See the explanation of elders and living creatures in Revelation chapter 4. They agree with the song of praise of the angels.

The twenty-four elders are *heavenly beings that represent God's Church* directly before God's throne throughout the history of the Bible. They represent *God's Church*, but worship *God as the Creator*: "who created all things by his will" and keeps them in existence (4:11). The name 'elders' points to them as being the *representatives* of the people of God in both the Old and New Testament periods. They enhance the glory of God's throne and his work as Creator (4:9-11) and Redeemer (5:9-10).

The four living creatures are *heavenly beings that represent God's creation* in all its fullness directly before God's throne throughout the history of the Bible. They represent *God's creation*, but worship God as the *God of history*.

God's creation is the backdrop for all history with all its bloody wars and glorious discoveries and especially the backdrop of God's history of salvation. The creation or nature is much more interested in the events of history than we might think:

- A star points the way to the Saviour born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:9)

- The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed (Romans 8:19)!
- In Revelation 5:11-14 not only the uncountable number of angels in heaven, but every creature on earth joins in and gives equal praise to God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb who was slain (cf. John 5:23)!

The whole creation worships the God who reigns over all history and especially the history of salvation within creation. The living creatures look at God and worship him as he realises his history of salvation and judgement in the past, present and future!

The message of the four living creatures is that the whole creation worships God as the God who controls history and the history of salvation and judgement. God “who was, and is, and is to come” was before creation and history, he now controls creation and history, and he will bring everything in creation and history to the goal he purposed for it! He will bring everything in creation and history to a meaningful end (cf. Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 14:24-27; Ephesians 1:10; Revelation 17:17)! And when he has done that, he will say: “It is done!” (perfect tense)(16:17).

19:5 And (then) a voice (*Greek: phone*) came (*Greek: exorchomai*)(*ao*rist) from the throne, saying (*present*): ‘Praise (*Greek: aineo*)(*imperative, present*) our God, all you his servants (and) those who *continually* fear (*Greek: phobeomai*)(*present*) him, both small (*Greek: mikros*) and great (*Greek: megalos*)!’ This is not the voice of God himself, because he speaks of “our God”. It is probably the voice of a mighty angel of God’s throne exhorting the people of God to also praise God. They had been waiting for this signal (cf. 5:13).

God’s people are called by two names. The name: ‘servants’ (slaves)(*Greek: douloi*) expresses their outward visible lifestyle as Christians. They completely submit to and obey Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ calls such servants ‘friends’ (John 15:14-15)! And the name: ‘the ones who fear’ (*present tense*) expresses their inward attitude. They are not afraid of God, but have a holy awe, a deep respect and a childlike trust in him. God’s people must continually praise God!

19:6 And (then) I heard (*Greek: akouo*)(*ao*rist) a sound *like* (*Greek: hos*) a great multitude, *like* the sound (roar) of many waters and *like* loud the sound (peals) of mighty thunder (*Greek: bronte*) , shouting (*present*): (cf. 14:2). The word ‘like’ expresses that the voices of the singing multitude were not like they had sung on earth, but like they will sing in heaven. The voices of the saved will be completely sanctified and renewed. The comparison with rushing waters and peals of thunder expresses the great number and the great enthusiasm and spontaneity of the singers. If singing is already so beautiful on earth, how wonderful will singing be in heaven and on the new earth!

Hallelujah! For our Lord (*Greek: kurios*) God Almighty (*Greek: pantokrator*) *has once for all time begun* to reign (assumed the kingship, that is, the kingdom in its final phase)(*Greek: basileuo*)(*ingressive aorist*) . God has begun to reign *visibly* (cf. 11:17). God has employed his great power (through Jesus Christ) to overthrow all enemies and has begun to reign *visibly* as the undisputed King in his kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

19:7 Let us rejoice (*Greek: chairo*)(*subjunctive, present*) and be glad (*Greek: agalliomen*)(*subjunctive, present*) and give (*Greek: didomi*)(*subjunctive, aorist*) him glory! The angels and people in heaven exhort one another to praise God.

For the wedding (*Greek: gamos*) of the Lamb (*Greek: arnion*) has come (*Greek: erchomai, eleusomai, elthon, heoraka*)(*ao*rist), and his bride (literally: woman)(*Greek: gyne*)¹ has made herself (*Greek: heautos*) ready (*Greek: etoimazo*)(*ao*rist). In the Bible, the relationship between God and his people are pictured as a marriage. In the Old Testament the true believers are called the bride (*Greek: numphe*) of God (Isaiah 62:5) or even the wife (*Greek: gunē* = an adult female in 1 Corinthians 14:34f and 1 Timothy 2:11f or a wife in Ephesians 5:22f) of God (Isaiah 54:5). And in the New Testament, Christ is called the bridegroom (*Greek: numphios*) (John 3:29; Matthew 9:15) and the true believers the betrothed virgin (*Greek: parthenos*) of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2), the bride (*Greek: gamos*) of Christ (21:9:7; 21:2,9; cf. Ephesians 5:23ff) or even the wife (*Greek: gunē*) of the Lamb (21:9).

The original word literally means woman, but may in the context refer to a bride (cf. 19:7; 21:9)(A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich p.167). Christ makes his bride ready (Ephesians 5:25). But also the bride makes herself ready for meeting Christ (1 John 3:1-3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 11:2-3). Thus, throughout the New Testament period from Christ’s first coming to Christ’s second coming the Church is figuratively the bride of Christ and prepares herself all the time for his second coming when figuratively the wedding will take place. The wedding is a symbol of the final visible unity and fellowship between Christ and the Church. It is a symbol of the highest joy in any relationship.

The kingdom of God in its final complete and perfect phase (Matthew 25:34) is pictured as a wedding banquet that never ends (Matthew 22:1-14; 25: 1-13; Luke 14:15-24). The believing Gentiles from all the nations will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom (Matthew 8:11). Neither Jewish nor Gentile believers will take a secondary place (Romans 10:12-13; Galatians 3:26-29).

19:8 And she was given (*ao*rist, *passive*) (by God) to wear (to clothe herself in)(*Greek: periballo*)(*subjunctive, aorist, medium*) fine linen (*Greek: bussinos*), bright (*Greek: lampros*) and clean (*Greek: katharos*). (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints).” By nature even the best righteous acts of people are ‘like filthy rags’ (Isaiah 64:6). But the completed work of salvation of Christ (John 19:30) that is accepted by faith becomes the ‘garment of salvation’ or ‘robe of righteousness’ for every Christian (Isaiah 61:10; cf. Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 1:30). The pure linen robes express perfect righteousness and holiness and purity (cf. 7:9,14; 15:6) that is imputed or credited to believers in Jesus Christ.

¹ Greek: he gunē, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich p.167

Every Christian has a Christian state and a Christian lifestyle. The Christian *state or position* in Christ means that he is completely and perfectly justified (forgiven). This righteousness cannot be earned or bought, but is freely and graciously given when a person accepts Christ by faith. The Christian *lifestyle or process* in Christ is expressed in a continued purifying of self (1 John 3:3) and in the righteous acts done by the Christians.

19:9 And (then) (the angel) said (*present*) to me: 'Write (*Greek: grapho*)(*imperative, aorist*): Blessed (*Greek makarios*) are those who are called (better than 'invited')(*Greek: kaleo*)(*participle, perfect, passive*) to the banquet(*Greek: deipnon*) of the wedding (*Greek: gamos*) of the Lamb! The angel is probably the one mentioned in Revelation 17:1. The blessing is for all people who have been called by God in a sovereign and effective way through the gospel and have responded to God's call (cf. Romans 1:7; 8:28-30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). They have actually come to the wedding of the Lamb and are now sitting there!

They are not merely the guests at the wedding, but are the Bride of the Lamb! The word 'calling' may not be exchanged with the word 'invitation'. The calling is NOT a special 'invitation' to others besides Christians (e.g. the Jews)(the futurist view) to attend the wedding of the bride to Christ. This calling also does NOT constitute a second chance for unbelievers (e.g. Gentiles)(the view of some cults) to be saved after Christ's so-called second return. The angel's blessing strengthens the faith of Christians from every nation.

And he said (*present*) to me: "These are (*present*) the true (*Greek: alethinous*) words of God. The words about Babylon's fall and about the salvation of the chosen, called and faithful people (17:14) are true, precisely because they come from God! Therefore, the readers of the book of Revelation must put their trust in these words! This is an encouragement for Christians!

19:10 At this I fell (*Greek: pipto*)(*aorist*) at (*Greek: emprosthen*) his feet to worship (*aorist*) him. But he said (*present*) to me, 'See (*Greek: horao, opsomai, eidon, eoraka*)(*imperative, present*) not! (*An elliptical expression for "See that you do not do it!"*) I am (*present*) fellow servant (*Greek: sundoulos*) of you and your brothers who hold (*present*) to the testimony of Jesus. Worship (*Greek: proskuneo*)(*imperative, aorist*) God! ' The angel puts himself on a par with the most ordinary of believers in Christ (cf. 22:9).

For the testimony (*Greek: marturia*) of Jesus is (*present continuous tense*) the spirit (*Greek: pneuma*) of prophecy (*Greek: pneuma tes propheteias*). 'The testimony of Jesus' is whatever Jesus has said in the Old Testament through his Spirit in the prophets and that is now written in the Old Testament (1 Peter 1:9-12). The testimony of Jesus is also whatever Jesus said in the New Testament through his Spirit in the apostles and that is now written in the New Testament (John 16:13-15). The Author of the Old Testament and the New Testament is no one less than the Spirit of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:9-12; 2 Timothy 3:16). The emphasis of Revelation 19:10 is that whatever Jesus Christ said in the Bible is the genuine spirit or inner content of all biblical prophecy. Whatever Jesus Christ said about God, about himself as the coming Messiah, about God's Old Testament people Israel, about Israel's continuation and extension to include believers in him from all the nations in the world (Genesis 22:18; Isaiah 56:3-8; Matthew 28:19), about the kingdom and the Church is the genuine spirit or inner content of all biblical prophecy. That is what biblical prophecy (against false prophecy) is all about!

'To prophesy' literally means to speak forth, to proclaim or to preach. The Old Testament warns against so-called prophets who speak dreams and visions invented in their own minds and not from the mouth of God (Jeremiah 23:16-32)! The New Testament warns against the many false prophets (Matthew 24:24). Real prophecy is proclaiming Jesus Christ and the contents of the New Testament. That is what Christian should proclaim! Christians should not go beyond what is written in the Bible (1 Corinthians 4:6; cf. Revelation 22:18-19)!

To put this in another way: the spiritual gift of 'prophecy' (A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, p.730) is to proclaim what Jesus revealed about himself, his words and works in the Bible. Biblical prophecy is therefore not making arbitrary predictions about the future of people and nations (Israel and Gentiles), but proclaiming Jesus Christ and his message! The genuine content of the Old Testament prophets is revealed in the testimony of Jesus in the New Testament! Whoever Jesus is, what he said and did is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (Matthew 5:17). All Jesus revealed, taught and commanded and that is now written in the New Testament is what the Old Testament prophets intended to say in their shadowy and preparatory proclamations (Matthew 5:17; Acts 3:18; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:6; 10:1; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

That is why the book of Revelation must be explained (interpreted) only in the light of the Bible. And that is why the Old Testament must be interpreted only in the light of the New Testament!

(2) Different views about the wedding of the Lamb (19:7a)

A first futurist view. The wedding of the Lamb is the ultimate union of Christ with his Church and will take place in heaven at the so-called first return of Christ (the rapture of the Church) and the so-called judgement of rewards for believers)(Matthew 25:31-46) at the beginning of the future period of the great tribulation (Daniel's 70th week) on earth and before the so-called second return of Christ (the so-called appearance of Christ with the saints and the millennium that follows). This is the futurist 'pre-tribulation pre-millennial' view (Larkin)².

² Larkin, Revelation pp. 167,170

A second futurist view. The wedding of the Lamb is the ultimate union of Christ with his Church and will take place in heaven after the fall of Babylon *in the middle* of future period of the great tribulation. This is the futurist ‘*mid-tribulation pre-millennial*’ view (Tenney)³.

The correct explanation. The wedding of the Lamb (and the wedding supper) is figuratively the ultimate union of Christ with his Church and will take place *after* the one and only second coming of Christ, which includes: the one final battle, the one resurrection of all people from the dead, the one final judgement of all people in the air, the one final destruction and renovation of this present world and the one descent of (still) “the bride” (the New Jerusalem) out of heaven (the air) onto the new earth. The one and only second coming of Christ, which culminates in the descent of the New Jerusalem onto the new earth, marks the beginning of the wedding of the Lamb on the new earth. Only then ‘the bride’ is also called ‘the wife’ of the Lamb (21:9-10). The work of salvation of Christ is completed when the last enemy (death) has been destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26) and when the final phase of the kingdom (the new heaven and the new earth) has arrived (1 Corinthians 15:24). This is the ‘*inaugurated or realised millennial*’ view (Greijdanus, Hendriksen, Bavinck, Gilmore)⁴.

(3) Different views about the bride of the Lamb (19:7b)

A futurist view. The bride of the Lamb is limited to the New Testament Church *between Pentecost and the first return of Christ* (the so-called rapture of the Church) which definitely excludes Israel (Larkin and Scofield).

The correct explanation. The bride of the Lamb is God’s Old Testament people *and* God’s New Testament people *from the creation to Christ’s second coming*. The bride consists of the believers in Israel and the other nations that joined Israel (Isaiah 56:3-8) during the Old Testament period *and* the believers from all the nations including Israel during the New Testament period (Ephesians 5:25). Both God’s Old Testament people and God’s New Testament people are called ‘the Church’ (Grieks: ekklesia) (Psalm 107:32; Ephesians 5:25).

In the Bible the relationship between God and his people is depicted as a marriage. In the Old Testament the true believers are called:

- ‘the bride’ of God (Greek: numphe) (Isaiah 62:5)
- or even ‘the wife’ of God (Greek: gunē = an adult woman in 1 Corinthians 14:34f and 1 Timothy 2:11f or even ‘a married woman’ in Isaiah 54:5).

In the New Testament:

- Christ is called ‘the bridegroom’ (Greek: numphios) (John 3:29; Matthew 9:15)
- and the true believers are called ‘the betrothed virgin’ (Greek: parthenos) of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2)
- the bride (Greek: gamos) of Christ (21:9:7; 21:2,9; cf. Ephesians 5:23ff)
- or even the wife of the Lamb (21:9).

The correct view regards the bride of the Lamb as *God’s Old Testament believers (Israel) who are continued and enlarged to include the New Testament believers from the other nations* (cf. John 10:16; Ephesians 2:11-22; 3:2-6; Hebrews 11:39-40). “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.”

(4) Different views about the wedding clothes of the believers (19:8)

A futurist view. The wedding clothes of the believers are *the righteous works of the Christians themselves*.

The correct explanation. The wedding clothes of the believers are *the righteousness that Christ earned by his death on the cross and credited to believers* (1 Peter 3:18; Romans 13:14). The wedding clothes are not brought along from earth by the participants, but are provided by King Jesus (Matthew 22:12). God *credits* righteousness only apart from human works (Romans 4:3,6). Christ’s perfect righteousness is *received* by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Christians have nothing that they have not received (1 Corinthians 4:7).

(5) Different views about the people called to the wedding supper (19:9)

A futurist view. The people ‘invited’ to the wedding supper are *all the righteous people not included in the Church* (the bride). They are the Old Testament saints, John the Baptist as “friend of the bridegroom”, “the blood-washed multitude” that will come out of the future great tribulation (second half of the future tribulation period) and all the righteous people of all past ages who are not included in the Church (Larkin)⁵.

This view leaves room for believing that the Old Testament Jews are justified in a different way (namely, by keeping the law) than the New Testament Church (namely, by grace through faith). It also leaves room to believe that God will justify non-Christians of all ages that have lived a righteous life (namely, by their moral and religious sincerity and good works)!

The correct explanation. The people *called* to the wedding supper are *exactly the same as the bride!* The bride consists of all the Old Testament believers (note: not necessarily only believing Jews) and all the New Testament believers right

³ Tenney p. 87

⁴ Greijdanus, Hendriksen, Bavinck, Gilmore

⁵ Larkin, Revelation pp. 169-170

up to the one and only second coming of Jesus Christ. They are blessed precisely because they have been called in a sovereign, effective and gracious way (Romans 8:29-30). They are NOT simply 'invited' to the banquet of the wedding of the Lamb! The word 'called' (Greek: *keklemenoi* > *kaleo*) is a participle in the perfect tense and passive voice. The perfect tense indicates a past completed action with the continuance of the results or state. The Old Testament believers are not simply *invited friends of the Bridegroom* or *invited wedding guests*, but called to be the bride herself, called to be the fellow-heirs of Jesus Christ! The Old Testament believers like Abraham are not second-rate citizens either in heaven or on the new earth, but inherit the same heavenly Jerusalem, which God prepared for "us" New Testament believers (Ephesians 3:2-6; Hebrews 11:10,16, 39-40)! After Christ's second coming the heavenly Jerusalem becomes the New Jerusalem on the new earth, which consists of the Old Testament believers (who believed in the Messiah that was still to come) and the New Testament believers (who believe in the Messiah that has already come) (21:12,14; Galatians 4:26-31).

PART 2. Revelation 19:11-21. THE FINAL BATTLE ON EARTH.

This is a vision of Christ's second coming. Jesus Christ is depicted as the Judge and the King (19:11-16). He comes for the final battle to conquer all his opponents (19:17-21). Thus at his one and only second coming Jesus Christ conquers his enemies (See the parallel passages: 16:12-16; 19:17-21; 20:7-10), including 'death' (20:14; 1 Corinthians 15:26), resurrects all the dead and judges all people that ever lived (20:11-15) and finally renews the whole creation (See the parallel passages: 20:11; chapter 21-22).

(1) At his second coming Jesus Christ is depicted as the Judge and the King (19:11-16)

Verse 11 and 12 speaks first of his appearance, then of his power and finally of his being.

19:11 And I saw (Greek: *horao, opsomai, eidon, heoraka*)(*aorist*) heaven standing open (Greek: *anoigo*)(*participle, perfect, passive*) and see! In Revelation 4:1 John saw *only a door* standing open in heaven allowing him to see into heaven. But now in Revelation 19:11 he sees (Greek: *kai eidon* > second *aorist* tense of Greek *horao*) *the whole* heaven open *and remaining open* (Greek: *anoigo, participle, perfect tense, passive voice*). This is symbolic for allowing Christ and the armies of heaven to come out for the final battle.

The exclamation "See!" expresses the glorious things John was permitted to see.

a white (Greek: *leukos*) horse (Greek: *hippos*) and the one sitting (Greek: *kathizo*)(*present*) on it (its rider) whose rider (is called) (*present*): Faithful (Greek: *pistos*) and True (Greek: *alethinos*). White is the colour of victory. The horse in the book of Revelation is pictured in connection with concepts of strength, terror, warfare and conquest (9:7; 14:20; 18:13; 19:11). The horse in the Bible is used in war and to fight (Psalm 20:7; Isaiah 30:16; 31:1; Job 39:19-25). That is why Israel's kings may not multiply war-horses (Deuteronomy 17:16) (cf. 2 Samuel 8:4; 2 Chronicles 1:14). The white horse and its rider is a symbol for Jesus Christ (6:2; cf. 19:14). He is faithful – he does what he promised and threatened (cf. 1:5; 3:7,14).

And with justice (Greek: *dikaioisune*) he judges (Greek: *krino*)(*present*) and makes war (Greek: *polemeo*)(*present*). Jesus Christ will give perfect and complete justice its full course in order to break the power of his opponents. His judgement will be terrible and his slaughter awesome. It will be executed according to his holy righteousness – he is perfectly just and perfectly fair (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:14; Job 34:11-12; Psalm 62:12; Luke 12:47-48; Romans 2:7-16).

19:12 His eyes (Greek: *ophthalmos*) (are) like flames (Greek: *flox*) of fire (Greek: *pur*). The eyes of Christ (1:14; 2:18) are symbolic of a judge whose eyes penetrates every issue, sees and perceives everything in order to make the right judgement. He even sees what is completely hidden (1 Corinthians 4:5; Hebrews 4:13).

On his head (are) many crowns (Greek: *diadema*). On the head of Christ are crowns, not victory wreaths (Greek: *stephanoi*) (cf. 6:2), but many royal crowns (Greek: *diademata polla*) symbolic of his high position and great authority. He is the King of all kings and Lord of all lords (1:5; 19:16).

having (*present*) a name written (Greek: *grapho*)(*participle, perfect, passive*) (on him) that no one (Greek: *oudeis*) knows (Greek: *oida*)(*perfect*) except (Greek: *ei me*) he himself. The name of Christ expresses his being, the inner character of his relation to God the Father (cf. 3:12). His being cannot be fathomed by any creature (cf. Job 11:7-8; Matthew 11:27). His name represents his divine greatness. **His name can only be revealed when the apocalypse is fulfilled (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12).**

19:13 And he is dressed in (Greek: *periballo*)(*participle, perfect, middle*) in a robe (Greek: *himation*) dipped (Greek: *bapto*)(*participle, perfect, passive*) in blood (cf. 14:20; Isaiah 59:17-18; 63:1-6). Christ's robe is symbolic of his office as Judge and King. It is stained (literally: dipped, dyed or painted)(*participle, perfect tense, passive voice*) in blood; not his own blood, but the blood of his enemies shed in conflict. The perfect tense indicates a past completed action with the continuance of the results or state – in the past his robe was dipped and now it remains stained. At his second coming, Christ does not come as the Lamb of God to save people from their sins, but as the Judge and King! His task is to judge and to avenge. While Isaiah 63:1-6 refers to God's punishment of his enemies in the past, Revelation chapter 19 refers to the punishment of his enemies in the future final judgement.

and his name is called (Greek: *kaleo*)(*perfect*) the Word of God (Greek: *ho logos tou theou*) (John 1:1). While the name of Christ in Revelation 19:12 (the name no one knows) expresses his *hidden divine nature*, his name in Revelation 19:13 expresses his *revealed divine nature*. This is the name by which he is called. It is the name of the Son of God and

expresses that God speaks whatever he wants to say completely and finally in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). Christ is the complete and perfect being of God in his revelation to man (John 1:14,18; 10:30; 14:9). In Jesus Christ, God fully expresses and reveals himself. In Christ, God took on the human nature (Cf. Romans 9:5; Colossians 1:15,19; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Peter 1;1; 1 John 5:20).

19:14 And the armies (*Greek: strateuma*) of heaven were *continually* following (*Greek: akoloutheo*)(*imperfect*) him. (Matthew 13:41-43; 24:30-31; 25:31-34). At his second coming, Christ does not come alone, but will be accompanied by the heavenly hosts, the armies of angels. They appear here as mighty warriors on horses.

(riding) on white horses and dressed (*Greek: enduomai*)(*perfect*) in (fine) linen, white and clean (cf. 19:11). White horses are symbolic of battle and victory. The white linen robes (cf. 19:8) are symbolic of their holiness and glory.

19:15 And out of his mouth comes (*Greek: ekporeuomai*)(*present*) a sharp (*Greek: oxeia*) (large broad) sword (*Greek: rompheia*) with which (*Greek: en aute*) to smite (*Greek: patasso*)(*subjunctive, aorist*) the nations. The large broad sword (cf. 1:16; 2:12,16) is not symbolic of the gospel, but rather symbolic of judgement and destruction. The nations are symbolic of all the non-Christians and unbelievers who refused to submit themselves to Christ, and to acknowledge and serve him. He will smite or slay them in the final battle, which marks the end of this present world and its godless, wicked and seductive influence.

And he will herd (shepherd in the sense of 'punish' in the final judgment) (*Greek: poimaino*)(*future*) them with an iron (*Greek: sideros*) sceptre (rod) (*Greek: rabdos*)(cf. 2:27; 12:5). To herd (tend, shepherd)(*Greek: poimaino*) here has destructive results, because the word is parallel to "dash them to pieces like pottery" (Psalm 2:9). Christ will punish them with strict justice. The word 'herd' has no reference to the idea of 'reigning (ruling)' in a so-called future millennial kingdom over a period of 1000 years. It has reference to the final judgment. The future tense indicates certainty!

and he treads (*Greek: pateo*)(*present*) the press (*Greek: lenos*) of wine (*Greek: oinos*) of the fury (burning anger) (*Greek: thumos*) of the wrath (*Greek: orge*) of God Almighty (cf. 14:19-20; Isaiah 63:1-6). The treading of grapes in the winepress is symbolic of how terrible God's wrath and God's judgement will be. God the Father has entrusted all judgement to God the Son (John 5:22; Acts 17:31). Christ is the executor of God's punishment and vengeance on the godless and wicked world.

19:16 And on his robe (*Greek: himation*) and on his thigh (*Greek: meros*) he has this name *written (perfect)*: 'King of kings and Lord of lords.' Christ's robe is symbolic of his office as King and Lord (cf. 19:13; Isaiah 59:17). The thigh is a symbol of the seat of power. As King and Lord he will destroy with divine power all his opponents. Christ is the highest King and the only real Lord (cf. 17:14; Deuteronomy 10:17).

(2) At his second coming Jesus Christ conquers in the final battle (19:17-21)

'The battle' (*Greek: ho polemos*, accusitive case: ton polemon) is the final battle in all history. It is the battle of Armageddon (cf. 16:14,16; 20:8).

Although the histories of Christ's enemies are presented under different symbols and in separate sections of the book of Revelation, *their end nevertheless coincides with the battle at the one and only second coming of Christ.*

- The end of people who bear the mark of the beast is described in Revelation 15:1-4 (cf. 13:11-17; 14:9,11; 16:2).
- The end of the great prostitute or Babylon the great is described in Revelation 16:19 and 18:1-24 (cf. 14:8; 17:5).
- The end of the beast out of the sea or the last antichrist and the beast out of the earth or the false prophet is described in Revelation 19:20-21 (cf. 11:7; 13:1-18; 15:2; 16:13; 17:3,7-14,16-17).
- The end of the dragon or Satan is described in Revelation 20:10 (cf. 12:3-4,7-9,12-17; 13:3; 16:13; 20:1-3,7-9).
- The end of death and Hades (the realm of death) is described in Revelation 20:14 (cf. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13; 1 Corinthians 15:26).
- And the end of all non-Christians or unbelievers, the godless and the wicked, is described in Revelation 20:15 and 21:8.

The final battle is not described at all. Only its outcome is mentioned! At his second coming:

- that is called 'coming' (*Greek: parousia*) in Matthew 24:3,27,37,39; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1,8; James 5:7; 2 Peter 1:16; 3:4,12; 1 John 2:28
- and is called 'appearance' (*Greek: apokalupsis*) in Luke 17:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7; 4:13)

Christ will overthrow the final antichrist with the breath of his mouth and destroy him (2 Thessalonians 2:8). This will not be a protracted battle as if Christ and his angels would be resisted for a long time, but will happen in a moment. The picture of the end is of a great earthquake that causes the godless and wicked world to collapse (11:13; 16:18-21). It is the sword that comes out of the mouth of the rider on the white horse that in one blow slays all his enemies (19:21). It is a fire that flashes down from heaven and devours all God's enemies (20:9). Christ will overthrow the final antichrist and his associates with the breath of his mouth and destroy them with the splendour of his coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8). All that ever opposed Jesus Christ lie killed and maimed on the battlefield, helpless and a prey for vultures and eagles (19:18).

19:17 And I saw (*Greek: horao*)(*aorist*) an angel standing (*Greek: histemi*)(*perfect*) in the sun (*Greek: helios*) who cried (*Greek: krazo*)(*aorist*) in a loud voice saying (*present*) to all the birds (*Greek: orneon*) that fly (*Greek: petomai*)(*present*) in midair (*Greek: mesouranema*). The angel stood (perfect tense) in the light of the sun (cf. Acts 13:11) so that he could

be seen by everyone everywhere as he called all the birds. Compare the angel flying in midair proclaiming the eternal warning to those who sit on the earth that the hour of God's judgement had come (14:6-7). Compare the angels sent with a loud trumpet call who will gather the elect of Jesus Christ from every place on earth (Matthew 24:31; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Compare Christ with his angels that will bring about the greatest separation of people in history (Matthew 25:31-33).

All the birds flying in mid-air are birds that fly high and belong to the birds of prey (like eagles and vultures), which tear and rip meat apart.

Come (*Greek: deute*)(adverb), gather together (*Greek: sunago*)(imperative, aorist) for the great banquet (*Greek: deipnon*) of God. In the Old Testament Christ spoke through the prophet Ezekiel (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12) and in the New Testament through the apostle John (Revelation 19:17-21) and said that all God's enemies would be slain in the battle of Gog and Magog (cf. 20:8). God would drag these enemies from the far north, beyond the Euphrates River. The river Euphrates is not the literal river, but symbolic of the border between God's people and God's enemies. God would bring them to the mountains of Israel. The mountains of Israel here is not a literal geographic place, but symbolic of Jerusalem, the place where God's people live (cf. 20:9). God would strike their bows and arrows from their hands. The bows and arrows are here not literally bows and arrows, but symbolic of everything they depend on for their power and control. And God would slay their armies and the nations. The nations are here not literally the Gentile nations, but symbolic of all the unbelievers that joined the final antichrist and his associates, whether they are Jewish or non-Jewish. Then God would give them as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. The birds and animals are here not literal wild birds and animals, but symbolic of God's instruments of judgement. God would prepare this great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel and they will destroy the mighty men of the earth together with their soldiers of every kind (Ezekiel 39:4,17-20). The fact that they would be eaten by wild birds and wild animals is not intended literally, but is a sign of their deepest humiliation, scorn and rejection. This is the Old Testament description of the final battle.

19:18 so that you may eat (*Greek: esthio, phagomai, ephagon*)(subjunctive, aorist) the flesh (*Greek: sarx*) of kings, and the flesh of commanders of thousands (*Greek: chiliarchos*), and the flesh of mighty men (*Greek: ischuros*), and the flesh of horses and their riders (*present*), and the flesh of all people, free (independent)(*Greek: eleutheros*) and slave (*Greek: doulos*), small and great. The dead will not be buried with honour, but will be left without care and without distinction (cf. 6:15) to be ripped apart (19:17-18), to be trampled in the winepress of God's wrath (cf. 14:20) and to be loathed by all mankind (cf. Isaiah 66:24). All this describes in symbolic language the result of the final battle, which is a part of the final judgement. All the godless, the wicked, the rebels and the unbelievers will be thrown in hell, where their worm will not die and where their fire will not be quenched (Isaiah 66:24; cf. Revelation 21:8).

19:19 And (then) I saw (*Greek: horao*)(aorist) the beast (*Greek: therion*) and the kings of the earth and their armies (*Greek: strateuma*) gathered together (standing assembled)(*Greek: sunago*)(perfect) to make (*Greek: poieo*)(aorist) war (*Greek: polemon*) against the rider (*present*) on the horse and his army. The beast here is the final antichrist in history (cf. 1 John 2:18). The kings of the earth are his political allies who agreed to give this antichrist their power to rule (cf. 16:14,16; 17:12-14,17). The battle (*Greek: ton polemon*) is the final battle, the battle of Armageddon (cf. 16:14,16) or the battle of Gog and Magog (20:8). It consists of two parts:

- The final attack of the antichristian powers against the Church (cf. 11:7-10; 16:14,16; 19:19; 20:8) and
 - Christ's victory over them at his second coming unto the final judgement (cf. 11:11-18; 16:17-21; 19:20-21; 20:9-10).
- The purpose of the enemy is to destroy the Christian Church and its service of Christ once for all, to stamp out the acknowledgement of God, faith in Christ and the proclamation of the gospel (cf. 11:7; 13:7).

19:20 But the beast was seized (arrested as people, captured as an animal)(*Greek: piazō*)(aorist) and with him the false prophet (*Greek: pseudoprophetes*) who had performed (*Greek: poieo*)(aorist) the miraculous signs (*Greek: semaion*) on his behalf (*Greek: enopion*), with which he had deluded (*Greek: planaō*)(aorist) those who had received (*Greek: lambano*)(aorist) the mark (*Greek: charagma*) of the beast and had worshipped (*aorist*) his image (*Greek: eikon*). The word 'capture' (seize, arrest)(aorist tense) has a neutral meaning, 'to take hold' (Acts 3:7) and a hostile meaning 'to seize, arrest, take into custody' (Acts 12:4) or 'to catch' a fish (John 21:3,10) or animal (19:20).

The beast (*Greek: to therion*) and the false prophet (*Greek: ho pseudoprophetes*) will succeed in deluding all the inhabitants on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world (17:8). Only those who have received the mark of the beast and worship him are deluded. God's elect cannot be deluded (Matthew 24:24)! This is a great encouragement for Christians!

Alive (*Greek: zao*)(present) the two of them (*Greek: duo*) were once for all time thrown (*Greek: ballo*)(aorist, passive) into the lake (*Greek: limne*) of fire (*Greek: puros*) of continual (present continuous tense) burning (*Greek: kaio*) (present) sulphur (*Greek: theion*). To be thrown alive into hell means to go to hell in soul and body, completely and immediately (cf. Matthew 10:28). All the following will be thrown alive into hell, symbolised by a lake of burning sulphur:

- the beast and false prophet (19:20)
- Satan (20:10)
- death and Hades (20:14)
- and all unbelievers (non-Christians)(10:15; 21:8).

See the explanation of the distinction between the Abyss, Sheol (Hades) and the lake of burning sulphur (11:7).

At Christ's second coming

- Satan's antichristian governments and its persecutions
- Satan's antichristian knowledge in religions, philosophies and sciences and its delusions
- Satan's antichristian kingdom with its immoral seductions
- and Satan himself with all his evil influence (20:10)

will cease forever on earth! All the evil influences of Satan, his persecutions, delusions and seductions will go with him to hell. Jesus says, "Depart from me, you who are curded, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)! They will never again appear anywhere outside of hell. This is a great encouragement for Christians!

19:21 And the rest (*Greek: loipos*) of them were killed (*Greek: apokteino*)(*aorist*) with the sword that came out (*Greek: exergomai, eleusomai, elthon, elelutha*)(*aorist*) of the mouth of the rider on the horse and all the birds (*Greek: orneon*) (that are unclean and detestable for religious reasons opposed to *ornis*: bird, cock, hen which are ceremoniously clean to eat) gorged themselves (*Greek: chortazo*)(*aorist*) on their flesh. This is still a description of the final battle. The bodies of these people are actually killed and left to be trampled and destroyed. This does not mean that they will not be thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. At the second coming of Christ also the bodies of the unbelievers (the wicked) will be resurrected (to be condemned) (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). And at the final judgement before the judgement seat of Christ or the great white throne (cf. 20:11; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:31) they will be judged, condemned and sentenced to eternal damnation in the fiery lake of burning sulphur (cf. 20:15; 21:8) and thrown body and soul into hell (Matthew 10:28).

(3) Different views about the final battle (19:17-21)

A futurist view. The battle in Revelation 19:17-21 is only *the final battle in the future tribulation period*, not the final battle in the history of the world. In this so-called 'third doom' the beast (antichrist) and the false prophet (19:17-20) will be destroyed. In the so-called 'fourth doom' the antichristian nations will be destroyed (19:21). But Satan will be bound at the beginning of the following period of the millennium of peace and only be destroyed 1000 years later.

The correct explanation. The final battle in Revelation 19:17-21 is really *the final battle in the history of the world*.

- In Revelation 16:14,16 this one and only final battle is *called* the battle of Armageddon.
- In Revelation 19:17-21 it is *depicted* in the same way as the battle of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39.
- And in Revelation 20:7-10 it is *called* the battle of Gog and Magog.

These are *three parallel descriptions* of the same battle.