

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

Hallelujah! Christ Finally Returns!

Revelation 19:1–21

Welcome to Messiah Bible Church. Today we are beginning a new series entitled “Final Things.” For the next eight weeks we will be exploring eight topics in the discipline of eschatology. Those eight topics are mentioned on the screen now: (1) The Second Coming, (2) The Millennium, (3) The Eternal State, (4) The New Jerusalem, (5) The Church Age and the Intermediate State, (6) The Rapture, (7) The Tribulation, and (8) The Church and Israel. Tonight we are going to begin with Christ’s Second Coming. So if you would, go ahead and turn with me in your Bibles to **Revelation 19**.

And as you are turning there, let me explain the plan for the next eight weeks and then also give you some disclaimers. The sequence of this series is as follows. Let me display that for you with the image on the screen. We will start our series at Christ’s Second Coming and then move forward to the end of time. That will essentially take us from **Revelation 19–22**. After that, we will backtrack all the way to the church age, the time that we are living in right now and work forwards to the Rapture and the Great Tribulation and then Christ’s Return.

The reason I’m doing it this way will become clear as I present the material. The main reason I’m doing it this way is because I want to start with and emphasize those things that are most clearly presented in the Scriptures. And Christ’s Return, the Millennium, the Eternal State, and the New Jerusalem are explicitly what God presents to us in the final four chapters of the Bible. So we will start at Christ’s Second Coming and work to the end. And then in week 5, we will come to our current time in history and work up to Christ’s Second Coming.

And allow me a few disclaimers for our series on “Final Things” as well. First of all, I am unapologetically a pretribulational, premillennial, dispensationalist. I want to state that at the outset of our series. If you don’t know what those terms mean, you will by the time that we are done with this series. The view that I hold to is the view that I was, for the most part, taught growing up. That was my pastor’s view when I was a kid. I had a Ryrie Study Bible in college. I attended the Moody Bible Institute for seminary which is a flagship school for the pretrib, dispensational view. And I have explored all the other views. I have tried to give a fair shake to all the other views out there. But like a lost puppy dog who explores the neighborhood for a while, I have always come back home. And I like my home. I’m not embarrassed by my home.

Now allow me another disclaimer. Eschatology is tough. There are many, many views out there. And eschatology (the study of end times) is the Christian discipline that we need to be the most gracious to one another concerning. I have lots of friends that disagree with my view. And many of my theological and pastoral heroes in the Christian tradition would disagree with what I’m going to teach over the next eight weeks. They disagree with me. And I disagree with them. And that’s okay.

If there is a line in the sand to draw, I would draw it in the place where eschatology is described in the Apostles’ Creed. From the earliest days of the early church, Christians held to the truth that “Christ ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.” Notice the future tense language: “He *will* come to judge the living and the dead.” That’s the only future tense language in the Apostles’ Creed. And all Christians everyone should agree on that. Christ is coming back again.

Now how that transpires, Christ's second coming, that is... good, godly Christian interpreters will disagree. But what follows is my attempt to make sense of the second coming. In fact, I think Revelation 19 spells it out pretty clearly. You be the judge of that tonight.

Today we're going to see two things in Revelation 19. In Revelation 19:1–10, we're going to see a picture of what awaits us in heaven right before Christ returns to earth. And then we will see the actual return of Christ in Revelation 19:11–21. The Apostle John got a sneak peek at that coming event two-thousand years ago. This is what transpires in the last few moments at the end of what we call the Great Tribulation before Christ's comes to set up his Millennial Reign on earth.

Now if you peruse Revelation 19 with me for just a moment, one of the things that you will notice quickly is that the key refrain in this passage is "Hallelujah." The operative word for today's message is this... Hallelujah! That word is stated four times in Revelation 19.

Coincidentally, that word is pretty much universally recognized all over the world. If you get on a plane tomorrow morning and go to a Bible-believing, gospel-preaching church in Argentina... you may not know a lick of Spanish, but I guarantee you that if you say "Hallelujah," they will know what you mean. If you get on a plane tomorrow morning and go to Cameroon, and meet with French-speaking Cameroonians... you might not be able to speak French, but if you say, "Hallelujah," they will understand you. That word "Hallelujah" is a globally recognized statement in Christian circles meaning "Praise the Lord." And it's interesting to me that in heaven, that word is uttered four times just before Christ's second coming.

Why is "Hallelujah" being shouted from heaven in Revelation 19? And what does that word signify? Let's look at this together.

The message today is entitled, "Hallelujah! Christ Finally Returns" And here's what I want to detail for you from the text. I want to give you *Four Reasons We'll Shout "Hallelujah!" Shortly Before the Second Coming* and then *Four Reasons We'll Shout "Hallelujah!" at the Second Coming*.

Here's the first reason we'll shout Hallelujah just before Christ's Return.

1) The harlot **Babylon** is **destroyed** (19:1–3)

The Apostle John writes in verse 1,

¹ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah!"

Now this great multitude in heaven will include us. It'll include the raptured church. It'll include the saints who have died and entered into the presence of God. It'll include the heavenly angels as well. Basically everyone who is part of God's posse in heaven will shout "Hallelujah." Why are we shouting Hallelujah? 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

Wow, okay. Who is the great prostitute? Who is this harlot? It's Babylon. And God has judged her.

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!"

Wow, this is worthy of two Hallelujahs. This must be an amazing event!

"Hallelujah! The smoke from her [Babylon] goes up forever and ever."

Now here's an important question—"Who is the harlot Babylon?" Well, the harlot Babylon represents the end-times government of the Beast (a.k.a. the Antichrist). And just before Christ's second coming, God allows the Antichrist to rule the earth for seven years. This is what's called by scholars "The Tribulation." We'll discuss that more in an upcoming lecture.

The first three and half years of Antichrist's reign was pretty much unopposed. God allows evil forces to have rule and reign over our world. And God stores up judgment for their wickedness. And what happens is that in the last three and a half years of Antichrist's reign is that God's wrath is systematically poured out on our world as an act of judgment and vengeance.

First the seven seals of judgment are unleashed (Rev 6). Then the seven trumpets of judgment are unleashed (Rev 8–9). Then the seven bowls of judgment are poured out (Rev 16:1–21). And all of these

judgments culminate in **Revelation 17–18** when Babylon, described as “the great prostitute,” is destroyed by God, and as **Revelation 19:3** says, “The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

In other words, her judgment is an everlasting judgment, and the plumes of smoke from her burning will be eternal. So I take that to mean that there will be a lasting remnant of Babylon’s destruction ostensibly in hell as a reminder of her judgment.

Now it may seem odd to you that people in Heaven would shout “Hallelujah” to celebrate destruction, but that’s because you may be unfamiliar with the way that “Hallelujah” is used in the OT.

That word “Hallelujah” means very simply “Praise the LORD.” It’s built on the Hebrew verb הָלַל which means “praise,” and then the word יְהוָה which is an abbreviation of “Yahweh.” So it means, “Praise the Lord” or “Praise Yahweh.” And in Hebrew the word הַלְלוּ is an imperative. It’s a command. “Praise Yahweh!” “Do it! Praise him!”

And when it shows up in the OT, exclusively in the book of **Psalms** by the way, it shows up to celebrate this two-fold victory of the Lord, as he vindicates his saints and vanquishes his foes. For instance the first time הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה shows up in the Bible, it’s at the end of **Psalms 104**, where the Psalmist writes, “Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! [הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה]” (104:35).

Nobody writes worships songs like that in our day!

Part of the reason we shout הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה as the people of God is because, as the Psalmist says, The Lord “comes to judge the earth, He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity” (**Ps 98:9**). Our Lord is a judge. And at the end of days, when the Great Tribulation comes to an end, the Lord is going to terrify the world with his judgments. **Don’t read the bowl judgments of Revelation late at night when you’re home alone.** It’s terrifying.

And what we see here in **Revelation 19** is that the false religion of the Antichrist is crushed. And the city of Babylon is burned to the ground. And the Great Prostitute is no more. And as John moves from the devastation of the earth to the throne-room in heaven, Jesus is about to come in victory and establish his 1000-year reign on earth. And in this intervening time between the end of the Great Tribulation and Christ’s return, the heavenly throngs are shouting, “Praise the LORD, הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה.” Babylon is defeated and Christ reigns supreme.

The ESV Study Bible says it this way, “**The heavenly praise of God (Hallelujah!) for this judgment can be understood only in light of the pervasive evil of “the great prostitute” (19:2) and the infinite worthiness of the God whom she repeatedly blasphemed.**”¹ And in this moment of triumph, we won’t mourn the dead. We won’t bemoan the loss of Babylon. Instead we will celebrate God’s victory over evil.

Now write this down as a second reason we’ll shout “Hallelujah” just before Christ’s return:

2) God **reigns** from his **throne** (19:4–5)

Look at **verse 4**.

⁴ *And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne*

Now there’s debate about who these elders are. My belief is that these elders are “official representatives” of the church, possibly including the twelve apostles. Some would say that the 24 elders represent the 12 apostles and the 12 tribes of Jacob from the OT, hence both OT saints and NT saints are represented here. I think that’s right, or some variation of that.

And these 24 elders will lead the rest of us. They’ll tell us when to sing. They’ll tell us when to shout. They’ll tell us when to bow and when to worship. They’ll be like worship leaders in heaven. **Sorry, Derek Flowers, you won’t have that job in heaven.** We’ll just follow the lead of these 24 elders.

And likewise the four living creatures are probably the angelic creatures that guard the glory of the Lord. Probably cherubim, those sphinx-like creatures that are represented on the cover Ark of the Covenant. The Bible says that God is enthroned between the cherubim (**2 Kgs 19:15; Ps 99:1**). I think these four creatures are

¹ Crossway Bibles. *ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008, Rev 19:3.

probably cherubim who like the 24 elders lead us to worship God. And here they are leading out in a Hallelujah chorus.

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."

I don't know whose voice this is in **verse 5**. I get the sense that this is single solitary voice here unlike the other voices in this chapter. Maybe it was a solitary angel. Maybe it was Christ, the Lamb, who is ascribing praise to God the Father. It's hard to say.

But there's this kind of antiphonal quality to the worship in heaven. These people over here shout "Amen. Hallelujah." And then these people over here shout, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great!" I think we will be totally awestruck in heaven when we get there when we see all these awesome cosmic things taking place, and when we get a chance to join the Hallelujah chorus before God.

Now I want to say this, because this is important. The second point from our message is "God reigns from his throne." And this is a reason we will shout Hallelujah in heaven just before Christ's Return. And I want to be clear about this. There's a sense in which this is already the case. In other words, God is always seated on his throne. The Bible often describes God as "seated on his throne" (**Ps 47:8; 103:19**, etc.). And this is a symbol of his sovereignty. This is a symbol of his power and authority. God is the Almighty King of Heaven and Earth. And Jesus after his resurrection is said to be seated at the right hand of God the Father.

But there's a sense in which the kingdom of God is in flux. There's a sense in which God has allowed some aspect of his kingdom to be ruled by demonic forces. That's why Satan is describe as the "god of this world" (**2 Cor 4:4**) and "ruler of this world" in its fallen sinful state (**Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Jn 5:19**). During the seven-year Tribulation period, Satan will be given maximum authority over our world. But what God signifies here in **Revelation 19** is that Satan's reign of terror is now over. God is taking his rightful place as ruler of heaven and earth.

What's the Lord's Prayer that we recite often? We say, "may your kingdom come, may your will be done, in earth as it is in heaven" (**Matt 6:10**). That finally comes to fruition in **Revelation 19**. That prayer is finally answered perfectly in this chapter, as God's sovereign reign is restored over both earth and heaven.

Here's a third reason we'll shout "Hallelujah" in heaven just before Christ's return.

3) The **Bride** is prepared for the **Lamb** (19:6-9)

Hallelujah! The Harlot Babylon is destroyed! Hallelujah! God is seated on his throne. And Hallelujah! The Bride is clothed in righteousness and prepared for the Lamb!

John writes in **verse 6**.

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 [**"El-Shaddai" in Hebrew; παντοκράτωρ in Greek**] 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;

The great foil for Christ in the book of **Revelation** is the Antichrist. Christ is symbolized as the Lamb. Antichrist is symbolized as the Beast. And the Beast is pictured in **Revelation 17** as married to the Great Prostitute, Babylon. I say married, even though there's no wedding. And their relationship is described as an orgy of sexual immorality, drunkenness, and blasphemy. When you read **Revelation 17-18** and hear about all the despicable things done in Babylon with the Beast as the controlling factor in all that happens, it just makes you sick. You don't feel that bad about the destruction of Babylon after you read **Revelation 17-18**.

And there's even a depiction of the Beast devouring the prostitute at the end of **Revelation 17**, "And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled (**17:16-17**)."

So in other words, the city Babylon is consumed by her bridegroom, the Beast. And that image shouldn't surprise us because that's what typically happens in godless relationships. The individuals devour one another because of their profound selfishness, and this is a cosmic, idealized conception of that during the Great Tribulation.

Now here's the question. If the Antichrist is the foil for Christ... If the beast is the foil for the Lamb... and if the beast is married to the Great Prostitute, Babylon, then who is married to Christ? In other words, who is the Great Prostitute a foil for? The answer is the Bride of Christ. The answer is the Bride of the Lamb. The answer (if you are familiar with other descriptions of Christ and his bride in the NT) is the church. The church (that's you and me, folks) is the bride of Christ.

And this juxtaposition of Prostitute and Bride in **Revelation 19** is not an accident. This description of Harlot and Heavenly Bride of Christ is intentional. God destroys this enemy city, and then the marriage supper of the Lamb is announced in heaven.

And the heavenly hosts shout in **verse 7**, "Let's rejoice. Let's exult. Let's give God the glory!" **"Let's party like it's 1999! Because Ding-Dong the Witch is Dead!** And now it's time for Jesus, the greatest bridegroom who ever lived, to marry his bride, the church.

You might say, "I don't know if I like thinking of myself as Jesus' bride." Some of you men, might feel like that's too effeminate an image for you. But that's because you don't know how manly Christ is. That's because you don't know how awesome and how powerful Jesus is. God describes all of his children, men and women, as his sons. And here he describes his entire family as the bride. And just before Christ returns, there will be a marriage in heaven between Christ and his church. This is what we've been waiting for.

By the way, just a little background here. In a Jewish wedding, it wasn't the Bride that got all the attention. I know that's how we do it in our day. I've done a few weddings as a Pastor, so I know how it goes. The men are dressed in their tuxedos or whatever and they look pretty non-descript. It's just black whatever with this instrument of torture tied around their necks. But the bride is dazzling. The bride is the star of the show. The bride is dressed to impress everyone in the room. And when the Bride comes, that's the moment everyone's waiting for. She comes down the aisle and everyone "oohs" and "ahhs" over her. And the man, the groom, just kind of stands there waiting for her to come to him.

But in a Jewish wedding, the groom was the center of attention. He would come down the aisle and claim his bride. Everyone would wait for him to show up. Remember Jesus' parable of the "five wise virgins." Five of the virgins had their oil ready to go when the groom showed up, but the other five weren't ready. The coming of the groom was the climactic moment in a Jewish wedding.

Now here's how the symbolism works in **Revelation**. Jesus, the Lamb, has conquered his foes. Jesus, the Lamb, was the only one worthy to unleash God's wrath upon God's enemies. "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" (**Rev 5:2**) a voice from heaven cried out. And John started weeping because no one was worthy. But then the Lamb that had been slain appears and he's the one who is worthy to break the seals (**Rev 5:6**). And after the Lamb had released God's vengeance upon the earth, then the Lamb comes to claim his Bride. And God the Father, The father of the groom, looks on with approval as the Wedding Feast commences.

Look at **verse 8**.

⁸ *it was granted her [that's the bride, that's the church] to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"*

The finest garments of the ancient world were made of linen. Silk was inaccessible to most people. So if you wanted to wear your best, you'd wear linen. And John tells us what this linen represents:

— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The bride is clothed in the righteous deeds of the saints. Is this the imputed righteousness of Christ, or the righteousness that proceeds from Christ's imputed righteousness? I personally think it's both. The bride cannot generate any righteousness herself, not in her fallen pre-conversion state. But after conversion with the help of the Holy Spirit, there are righteous deeds that are produced by the saints. In fact there have to be righteous deeds produced by the saints. Because James would say, "faith without works is dead." In other words, real faith in Christ and real justification will inevitably produce righteous deeds. And these deeds are the church's royal wedding garb. And she looks fabulous before her wedding.

And then in **verse 9**, after this epic presentation of what happens at the end of the Tribulation... after this stupendous and fantastical vision of the throne-room of heaven, the angel says to John... look at **verse 9**.

⁹ *And the angel said to me, "Write this*

John's been writing all this down since **chapter 1**. Since this vision started on the Island of Patmos where he was sentenced to live out his days and die as an old apostle. John probably thought he was finally going to die in his old age. But God had different plans for John. God had one final task for him before he went home to eternity. And it was this vision given by an angel, a messenger of God, that became known as **The Book of Revelation** in our Bibles.

John says in **chapter 1** of this book "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy." We are blessed by John's writing of this book. And now, nineteen chapters later, John is still writing.

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."

Who are the guests invited to the wedding? Maybe OT saints who are technically not the Bride of Christ, the church. But I'm not opposed to the idea either that we are the bride of the wedding and also the guests of the wedding. Just like Jesus is the Lamb, but he's also the conquering warrior on the horse.

And here's a fourth reason we'll shout Hallelujah just before Christ's return!

4) Worship **belongs** to God **alone** (19:10)

Hallelu... Jah! Praise Yahweh. Only he is worthy of worship when we enter into eternity.

John makes a big mistake here, and as one commentator put it he surely knew better. I guess because he was so overwhelmed by all he saw and the angel who was revealing all these secrets to him in a vision, **verse 10** says,

¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet [that's the feet of the angel who was with him] 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."

That word for "worship" is the Greek προσκυνέω which means "to fall down and worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before."²

For the record, we don't bow down and worship any human figure. We don't bow down and kiss the rings of any pope. We don't bow down and worship any rock star or movie star or any other mortal human being. And we don't even bow down and worship any angelic creatures, which quite honestly can be pretty impressive when they show themselves in bodily form.

The angel says, "**Worship God!**" and then there's one final statement in **verse 10**. I actually believe this is part of the angel's statement to John, but the ESV isn't so sure so it takes it out of the quotation marks. The angel says,

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

In other words, the angel is saying, "**You testify about Jesus. I testify about Jesus. All our fellow coworkers both angels and humans testify about Jesus. Don't worship me or make too much about me. It's all about Jesus.**" John Walvoord says it this way, "**Prophecy at its very heart is designed to unfold the beauty and loveliness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**"³ So don't make much of the prophet or the prophecy. It's all about God. It's all about Jesus.

And speaking of Jesus, let's transition now to his second coming. And before we unveil that coming, let me just preempt that with a few thoughts.

For whatever reasons, people in our culture seem to think about Jesus as an emasculated and effeminized male leader. When you talk to people about Christ, they will often describe for you a kind of hipster-Jesus who goes around teaching parables about peace, love, and harmony. And if you ask an unbeliever about Jesus, or in some cases uninformed Christians, that's usually the only picture that they will paint for you.

And I would say that the best way to counteract that false view of our Messiah is to lead them to **Revelation 19:11–21**. The best way to counter-balance that false caricature of Christ is to state on no uncertain terms, that the Lord Jesus is a warrior.

² BDAG, προσκυνέω, 882.

³ Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 272.

Because look at this. Look at **Revelation 19:11**. Now it's time for Jesus to return. When the Apostles' Creed says, "He will return to judge the quick and the dead," This is the image in my mind.

Look at **verse 11**:

¹¹ *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse!*

Now let me just stop right here and remind you what we saw just before this. We saw before this remarkable event in heaven known as "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb." That was the climactic union of Christ and the church. And the scene in heaven is joyful. The scene is tranquil. The scene is wonderful, as the Bride of the Lamb is clothed in "fine linen, bright and pure" (**19:8**). And the multitudes in heaven rejoice as "the marriage of the Lamb" commences (**19:7**).

Now lambs are docile creatures. And Christ came as a docile sacrifice for us at his First Coming. And the image of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is one of peace and tranquility and rejoicing and festivities. But what follows that marriage supper is anything but peaceful and tranquil.

¹¹ *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! [And] The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*

Go ahead and write this down. Here are four additional reasons that we'll shout "Hallelujah!" at the Second Coming:

1) Christ comes as a **conquering warrior** (19:11-12)

You might say, "**How do you know this is Christ, Pastor Tony?**" Well John says later in **verse 13**, that the person riding this horse is called "The Word of God." And that's an obvious reference to John's Gospel where in **John 1**, Jesus is called "The Word of God," the Divine **LOGOS**.

Also we know that it's Jesus, because who else could this be? As John continues to describe this Rider on a White Horse, it becomes more and more obvious to the reader that this is the God-man, Jesus Christ.

And John says in **verse 11** he is called, "Faithful and True." The only man who is faithful and true all the way to the end is Jesus. The only man who never sinned and fulfills every promise that he ever made is Jesus. And he's coming back at this moment in **Revelation 19**... *not* to claim his own. He's already done that. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb has already started, and we are with him. He's not coming to claim his own, he's coming to judge and make war.

Let's keep going. Look at **verse 12**.

¹² *His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems,*

Diadems are crowns that were used to symbolize royalty and kingship. One diadem would typically suffice for one kingdom, but Christ has "many diadems." In other words, Christ rules all the kingdoms and reigns over all the earth, so he has many diadems.

If you remember, the last time we saw Jesus "crowned" he was crowned with a crown of thorns. But this ain't Golgotha! That work is done. This is a new work.

and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

This is fascinating to me. "**Christ has a name written that no one knows but himself.**" Now John doesn't say where this name is written, but I assume it's written across the diadems somewhere, or maybe it's emblazoned on the side of the horse. And no one knows this name for Jesus. So obviously this can't be "Yahweh" or "Emmanuel" or "El-Shaddai" or any of those other names, because we know those names.

So there must be something written on Jesus's crown or on Jesus's steed in Hebrew or Aramaic or whatever, and John can see it, but he doesn't know what it means. And no one else does either. The armies of heaven don't even know. The raptured saints don't know. The angels guarding the glory of God don't know.

I think this "name that no one knows" but Jesus signifies two things: **(1)** It signifies that there are things about God that we don't know, and we won't even know in heaven. **Deuteronomy 29:29** says "The secret things belong to the LORD." There are some things that are only known and can only be known by God, because God is inscrutable. And by the way, when we get to heaven we will still be learning and growing in knowledge of God. I think some people get confused about that. If we knew everything in heaven, if we were omniscient, we'd be God. And we aren't God. So I believe that the learning process will continue in eternity, and there will still be things that we don't know in a glorified state. And that will be part of the fun of being in

heaven is learning new things about God every day for billions and billions of years. Jesus Christ is inscrutable today and he will be inscrutable in eternity.

2) Also a second thing this signifies is that no one has power or authority over Jesus. In the ancient world, you would try to ascertain a person's name or a spirit's name or an angel's name, and many conjurers believed that that gave you power of the spirit. We'll no conjurer knows this Name of Jesus. And no conjurer whether Satan or Antichrist or the False Prophet will have authority over Jesus in any way. He is the unknowable one. And "he has a name written that no one knows but himself."

Write this down as a second reason we'll shout "Hallelujah!" at the second coming:

2) Christ brings his **army** of the **redeemed** (19:13-14)

Look at **verse 13**.

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

The text says literally that Jesus' a robe will be "baptized" in blood. So this isn't a little smattering of blood. This isn't a just a little dabble of blood on his robe. It has been baptized, fully immersed in blood.

And there's some debate here about whose blood it is that the robe is dipped in. Is it Christ's blood? Is it a symbol of his salvific work? Or is his enemies' blood? I could go either way on this, but I'm more inclined at this point to view it as Christ's blood and a symbol of his salvation.

And that's because of the immediate context of this passage. At the end of **verse 13**, Christ is called "The Word of God." And as I said already that's a reference to **John 1**, and the LOGOS that became flesh and lived among us. Why did Jesus become flesh? So that he might shed his blood! Why did he shed his blood? So that we might be redeemed! And so his blood-drenched robe is a symbol of his saving work.

And just to reinforce that in context, look at **verse 14**.

¹⁴ *And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on [their own] white horses.*

That's us, folks. That's you and me and the rest of the church. You might say, "**How do you know that, Pastor Tony?**" Because "the fine linen, white and pure" was just used to describe the Bride of the Lamb, the church. These are the wedding garments of the church. And these are the battle garments of the church too.

A person asked a pastor once if he was going to see the Second Coming of Christ. And that pastor responded, "You're not just going to see the Second Coming; you're going to be the Second Coming. You'll be part of the armies of heaven. I think that's right. We'll be there with Jesus when he returns."

Now just to clarify, I don't think that Jesus's army will be limited to just the church. I believe that the armies of heaven will consist of OT saints, NT saints, Tribulation saints (those who were martyred during the tribulation by Satan and the Antichrist). The angels of heaven will probably be included in this army. But we will be there as well.

And in fact, I think we will be more prominent than the angels because we are the ones who were redeemed by Jesus as symbolized by the bloody robe that Jesus is wearing on his white horse. You might say, "**Are these real horses that we are riding or are they horse-like creatures?**" I don't know. I assume that if John meant "like a horse" he would have said "like a horse." He didn't say "like a horse." He said "white horses."

How do they fly then? I don't know. But I guarantee that'll be that last thing that I'll ask Jesus at this moment. **Hey Jesus, how are you making these horses fly?** I'm just going to mount my steed and follow Jesus's lead.

And you might ask if these horses are flying to earth from heaven, how did they get there? Well the text just simply states that "heaven opened up" in **verse 11**, so I assume that some portal will open between heaven and earth and we will enter the portal and advance towards earth. But to be honest, I don't know how that's going to work either. There's some mystery to this text. But there's enough clarity, and there's enough by way of description of these events that John gives us for us to know that something awesome will happen in that moment. **And we want to make sure that we are on the right side of this battle, when the battle commences.**

Now watch this. The picture of Jesus gets even more *terrifying* for his enemies, and more *electrifying* for us. Look at **verse 15**.

¹⁵ *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations,*

You might say, “**When I get on my horse, I’m going to head down towards Antichrist, and I’m going to let him have it. I’m going to slice and dice my way through all of Jesus’s enemies. I’m going to barrel roll my horse on my horse, and I’m going to let them have it.**” No! Here’s the problem with that. I hate to disappoint you. But you don’t have any weapons at Jesus’s return. And even if you did, this battle is going to be over so quick that you’re not even going to get a shot off.

The only weapon that is even mentioned in this whole section is a sword that proceeds from Christ’s mouth. And the picture here is not one of Christ dueling in hand-to-hand combat (or hand-to-mouth combat) with Antichrist... It’s Christ with one fell swoop effortlessly downing his enemies.

Some people have said that the “sword” isn’t a literal sword coming from his mouth, instead this is a figurative reference to his word. And with one word he fells his enemies. I actually take this a little more literally than that. I think there will be an actual sword that extends out of Jesus’s mouth. And that grotesque image is part of the terror that he evokes from his enemies.

And in my mind, this is what happens. That sword emits some kind of pulse or some kind of sound wave or heat wave that in one motion destroys the armies. Or maybe there will be multiple pulses and multiple waves that systematically destroy all of his enemies. Whatever the case, Christ will be the only one fighting, and we will just be there as decorative pieces on the battle field. We will be symbolic non-combatants as Christ does all the work himself.

And look at the end of **verse 15**.

and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

Literally he will “shepherd them with a crook (a shepherd’s staff) of iron.” This is a foreshadowing of Christ’s 1000-year reign on earth. He will rule/shepherd with strength and with power and with absolute authority... *iron* being one of the strongest known substances in the ancient world.

[And] *He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.* ¹⁶ *On his robe and on his thigh [that’s a place of strength in a man. The quadriceps are the strongest muscles in a man’s body] he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

Write this down as a third reason we’ll shout “Hallelujah!” at the second coming:

3) Christ rules with a **rod** of **iron** (19:14–16)

When Christ reigns, it won’t be a democracy. Everyone with me? Christ will bring back absolute monarchy. And we will be absolutely thrilled to submit fully to him. We’ve been waiting for centuries for a king like this.

They say that “**absolute authority corrupts absolutely.**” Well that’s because they’ve never lived under the authority of an absolute Jesus Christ. I think that absolutely authority *does* corrupt absolutely in a fallen world with fallen human beings. But Jesus Christ isn’t a fallen human being. Jesus Christ is a perfect, sinless ruler. And when comes to reign over the world during his 1000-year reign, he will judge with perfect righteousness.

You might say, “**Well isn’t everyone sinless in the Millennial Kingdom, Tony? Doesn’t everyone have incorruptible bodies?**” Actually, no. Some will. Some won’t. The evidence from **Revelation 20** suggests that the earth will still be populated with humans that will still need ruling. And we will be part of Christ’s ruling kingdom. More on that next week.

All I want to say about that now is that Christ will rule with a rod of iron. Christ will rule with perfect authority, justice, and equity, and will be intolerant of any deviation from that. He’ll rule with a rod of iron.

Finally, here’s a fourth reason we’ll shout “Hallelujah!” at the second coming:

4) Christ defeats the **Antichrist** and his **followers** (19:17–21)

Now what I’m about to read to you is going to get pretty gruesome, so brace yourself. And it’s meant to be gruesome. I’m not going to apologize for it. It’s purposely descriptive of all the carnage that Jesus will bring

about on planet earth when he returns. It's meant to prepare you for what will ultimately happen to the enemies of God. And it's meant to scare you straight if you're off course.

So I'm just going to let God's Word do its work here. Look at **verse 17**.

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, ¹⁸ 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." ¹⁹ 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 **[that's Jesus, of course, and all of his army behind him]**. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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.

There are actually two feasts in **Revelation 19**. There is the marriage supper of the Lamb. And then there's the bird feast. The question, as Grant Osborne puts it in his commentary, is "**will you be the eater or will you be the eaten?**"⁴ The question that I would ask you now is this—are you part of the posse of Christ, or are you part of the posse of Satan and Antichrist? Because a worse fate than this awaits those who follow Satan! A worse fate than just being eaten by birds, as humiliating as that is! And likewise a greater joy awaits those who follow Jesus than just being a part of this battle of Armageddon, on a horse riding behind Jesus, as exciting as that will be!

Now let me just explain a few things in this section, and then we'll conclude and be done. First of all, who is the Beast? The Beast is the Antichrist, and he will harness the power of Satan to rule a one-world kingdom from Babylon for seven years during the Tribulation. And as the wrath of God is unleashed on the Antichrist, and on his followers, and on the harlot Babylon in **Revelation 16–18**, the Antichrist will mount a counteroffensive to meet Christ and the armies of Christ at his Second Coming. This is what's referred to as the "**The Battle of Armageddon**" (**Rev 16:16**). This goes all the way back to **Revelation 16** when the Antichrist gathered his armies to defeat Christ at his return.

Look again at **verse 19**.

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth **[this is Antichrist and his followers; They have rejected Christ and sided with the Great Imitator, the Beast]** with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

They might as well have been coming against Christ with Nerf guns and water pistols. They don't stand a chance against Christ. But they are so deceived by Antichrist that they think they can mount an offensive. It's ridiculous, but so is *all resistance* to Christ.

And you can see the result in **verse 20**.

²⁰ 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.

The false prophet is mentioned earlier in **Revelation 16**. The beast and the false prophet are described as coming out of the dragon, which is Satan. That's why I say that they harnessed the power of Satan to create their one-world kingdom.

The false prophet, as I understand it, is a literal man, not a spirit or a fallen angel, who uses the power that Satan has given him to deceive the nations. And that's probably why these kings of the earth so ridiculously think they can take on Christ and his army. They've been bamboozled by this false prophet.

And the false prophet works in concert with the Antichrist. In fact many scholars refer to the false prophet, the Antichrist, and Satan as the unholy trinity. These three individuals (two men, and one fallen angel) make up a "the great imitation" of the Holy Trinity. And two of these three individuals get judged here at Armageddon. Satan's judgment, by the way, comes later. We'll talk more about that next week.

So here's what happens at the end of **Revelation 19**. Christ comes to earth with his all of his army behind him. And Antichrist comes out to meet him with all of his army including the false prophet. And according to **verse 20**, all of Antichrist's army has the mark of the beast, which in **Revelation 13** is described as the number 666 stamped (or possibly even branded) on their forehead.

⁴ Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT, 673–4.

And these guys gather to make war against “him who was sitting on the horse.” What are they going to do? Shoot him? Stab him? Out-duel him with their swords? They don’t stand a chance against Christ.

And here’s the result in **verse 20**.

These two [that’s the Antichrist and the False Prophet] were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

The Lake of Fire is the eternal dwelling place of the enemies of God. Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire too, but that won’t happen till after the Millennium. Other unbelievers are also sent to the Lake of Fire after the Millennium and after what’s called “The Great White Throne Judgment,” when Death and Hades give up their dead. We’ll look at that, when we cover **Revelation 20** next time.

So at this point, the only people who populate The Lake of Fire are the Antichrist and the false prophet. They are the down payment, you might say, on those who will be deposited after Jesus’s thousand-year reign on earth. And their suffering in the Lake of Fire will be an everlasting torment. It will be a place, as Jesus said earlier, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (**Matt 13:42**, et al.).

You might say, “**Well what about the army of the Antichrist? What about the kings, the captains, the mighty men, and all the other people, both free and slave, small and great?**” Well they will be destroyed instantaneously by the Warrior, Jesus. And their souls will go into Hades and await final judgment with all the other unbelievers.

And their bodies will be picked apart by scavenging birds... birds that will gorge themselves on the flesh of these “666-branded” enemies of God and followers of the Antichrist. They receive the most embarrassing and the most humiliating form of death imaginable to an ancient Roman or ancient Jew. They are killed and left unburied or unburned. And their flesh is picked to pieces by stupid and mangy birds that gorge on their flesh.

Let me just state the obvious here. It is not a good thing to be an enemy of Jesus.

You know when these people first got the “666” branded on their forehead or branded on their right arm. That was a good thing during the Great Tribulation. You couldn’t buy or sell anything without that mark. And those who didn’t get the mark, those converts to Christ during the Tribulation, they were persecuted for not having the mark. But it’s like a lot of things. What seems great at first, doesn’t always end up great. Those saints who reject the mark of the beast in the Great Tribulation and were martyred for their faith in Jesus are later seen feasting with Jesus in heaven. Those who take the mark and follow the Antichrist are part of a feast as well. After Christ destroys them, the birds start feasting on their flesh.

So let me reiterate the question I asked earlier. “**Will you be the eater or will you be the eaten, when Christ returns?**” “**Which feast will you be a part of?**” Will you be part of Christ’s conquering army, eternal recipient of God’s grace and mercy and a participant in Christ’s Kingdom forever? Or will you be vulture food?

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