

Revelation - Chapter 18 & 19

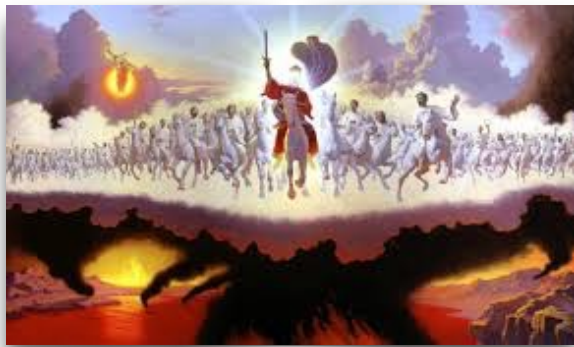
Babylon Falls, Marriage Supper of the Lamb & Christ Returns

John has just seen God's final judgement, the seven bowls of wrath poured out on the earth by seven angels. The first bowl of God's wrath is a plague on those who have received the mark of the beast, the second and third bowls kill all living things in the seas and freshwaters, the fourth causes the sun to scorch the earth's inhabitants so severely that it will seem that the atmosphere is on fire. The fifth bowl of wrath pours out on the throne of the beast and his kingdom becomes dark and the people are consumed by excruciating pain.



The sixth bowl of God's wrath causes the great river Euphrates to dry up and the way is prepared for the kings from the east to cross into Armageddon. Then Jesus speaks, giving a final warning that his coming will be sudden and un-announced. Jesus also assures believers that they will not be forgotten.

The seventh bowl of wrath causes a great earthquake as never before occurs. The shaking from the earthquake will be so severe that it will renovate and reconfigure the earth in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom. Sadly, the earth's inhabitants do not repent and receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



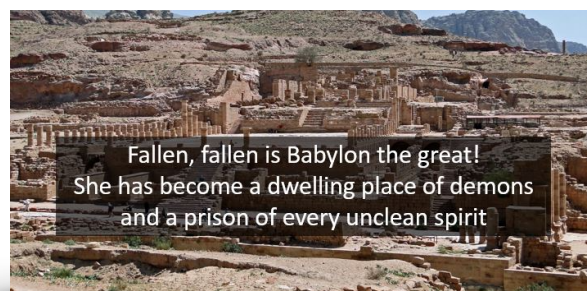
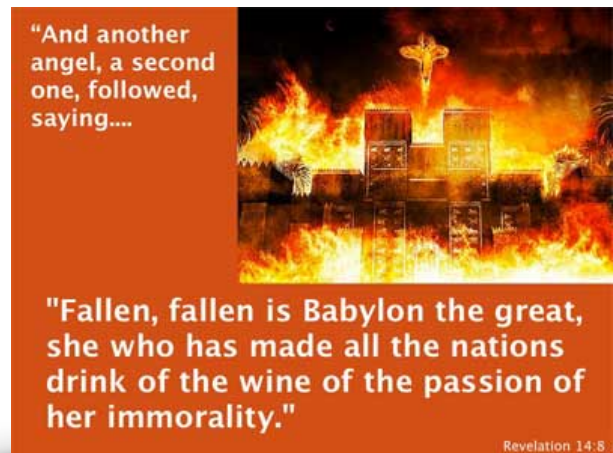
John witnesses the destruction of Babylon, representing false religion and also the judgment of a woman, the symbol of Babylon, described as the "the great prostitute", who is seen sitting on many waters - the many nations ruled by Babylon. Babylon has become the epitome of spiritual adultery and as such is judged by God.

Antichrist and the ten nations who unite will wage war against the Lamb. The Lamb will return as King of kings and Lord of lords and overcome the Beast and the kings of the earth. Christ will be accompanied by those who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior ("the called and chosen and faithful" Rev 17:14).

Babylon Falls

John sees another angel coming down from heaven so splendid that the earth was illumined with his glory. Everyone will not only see him but also hear him as he loudly announces that Babylon is fallen. Here's what John witnesses:

- This is Babylon as an actual city in its political and economic character. In Chapter 17 Babylon represented the world wide false religion and also the judgment of a woman, the symbol of Babylon, described as the “the great prostitute”, who is seen sitting on many waters - the many nations ruled by Babylon.
- Where the city is located is not stated in the Bible. Although it will be one city, its influence will be worldwide. Some commentators believe the old city of Babylon will be its site while others believe Rome will become Babylon.
- This event comes late in the Great Tribulation, just prior to the second coming of Christ. The destruction of the woman seems to precede the Great Tribulation and paves the way for the worship of the beast.
- Two reasons are given for Babylon's impending destruction: demonic activity and sensuality.
 - All the demons on the earth will be in Babylon including the two hundred million formerly bound demons that were released at the sounding of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:13-16), the demons released from the abyss at the sounding of the fifth trumpet (Rev 9:1-11), those cast from heaven with Satan (Rev 12:4,9), and those previously on the earth. Their mission will be to inspire extreme human wickedness, from sexual immorality to unbridled luxury.
 - Babylon will seduce the entire world with its immorality. Babylon has its own system of government and Antichrist will confiscate the wealth gained by the fallen apostate church. Global corporations will make their headquarters in Babylon and the beast



will rule over the system. The people of the world will fall into a religious and materialistic daze. Babylon's sin is declared so severe that it reaches to the heavens, an allusion to the tower of Babel that began the evil career of ancient Babylon (Gen 11:5-9).

- Another voice from heaven calls God's people to flee the doomed city, just as His people were urged to leave Babylon in ancient days (Jer 51:45). By leaving they will not participate in her sin and will not receive the plagues about to befall her.
- Her judgement is announced as a double portion due to her intense wickedness and because she glorified herself. She mixed a cup of sin for the nations to drink down to the full so she is given a double cup of divine judgment to drink. ¹ She has willfully sinned against God.



- Her judgement will come in one day and is reminiscent of the fall of Babylon in Daniel 5, which fell in the same hour that the finger traced its condemning words on the wall.
- Three plagues will result in Babylon's complete devastation: pestilence, mourning and famine. After those three plagues, Babylon will be burned up with fire. The great city will be found no more (Rev 18:21). Many commentators

believe that this judgement will come during the bowl judgements, specifically at the seventh bowl judgement just prior to Christ's return to earth.

- Those who profited from Babylon's wealth will mourn and wail hopelessly as the great city is devastated. They weep and mourn, not out of some emotional sympathy for the city, but because they have been stripped of the key source of their finances. ² They stand far off from the city because they fear the same judgement may befall them.
- The first mourners are the leaders including the ten kings who rule Antichrist's kingdom under his authority and the rest of the world's leaders under them. They

will be shocked and dismayed at the destruction of the city they thought was invincible.

- The second mourners to appear were the merchants of the earth. With the destruction of Babylon, whatever economic activity taking place on the earth will come to a halt. There will be no one to buy their cargoes. Twenty-eight items are listed that made up their merchandise ranging from gold and silver, precious stones, fine cloth, exotic woods and stones, spices, perfumes, fine foods, animals, slaves and humans. There will be a great trade in iniquity and sin. These items were the source of immense financial gain.
- The third and final group in the vision is every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor that makes their living by the sea. Babylon will be an important distribution center and with its destruction, there will be no more goods to transport by those who make their living by the sea. In a typical ancient expression of grief, the sailors threw dust on their heads as they lamented over the destruction of Babylon in one hour.

A strong angel throws a huge stone into the sea declaring that the great city will be devastated with violence, every facet of society from fine arts to night life, from fine craftsmanship to common labor will all be gone at once. The angel states that Babylon will be destroyed because all the nations were deceived by her sorcery and her murderous slaughter of God's people. (Rev 18:23-24) Babylon will be so thoroughly destroyed that it will never rise again, as predicted by the Old Testament prophets (Isa 13:19-22; 14:22-23; Jer 50:13, 39: 51:37).



The Two Babylons of Revelation 17-18 ³

	Religious Babylon Revelation 17	Political/Commercial Babylon Revelation 18
Focus:	Babylon as a System	Babylon as a City
Timing:	Falls at the beginning of the Great Tribulation	Falls at the End of the Great Tribulation
Destroyer:	The Beast and the Ten Kings	Jesus Christ at His Second Coming
Result:	No Mourning	Great Mourning

The Fourfold Hallelujah

Heaven's response to the annihilation of Babylon which represents the destruction of everything that is evil and demonic in the present world system is, "Hallelujah." So loud it sounds like roaring waters and thunder it is cried out four times.

Hallelujah, a common Old Testament exultation simply means praise the Lord. In its first Old Testament appearance, Hallelujah also expresses praise for God's judgment on the wicked oppressors of His people (Psa 104:35).



Hallelujah appears only four times in the New Testament all in Revelation chapter 19:1,3,4,6. Three groups cry hallelujah before God: the saints in heaven (Rev 19:1-3), the twenty-four elders before the throne of God (Rev 19:4), and the great multitude (Rev 19:6).

- Hallelujah! Full salvation has come. Babylon is gone and Jesus reigns. (Rev 19:1)
- Hallelujah! Justice has arrived. God's judgments are true and righteous as evidenced by the destruction of wicked Babylon. (Rev 19:2)
- Hallelujah! Rebellion is ended. Smoke "rises up forever and ever" indicates that this judgment is final and irreversible. The language is similar to that used of God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:28) and Edom (Isa 34:10). The destruction of Babylon marks the end of human rule. The rebellion that began in the garden of Eden is finally ended and there will be no more false religion or injustice.
- Hallelujah! God is in control. The evil world system has been destroyed and God's kingdom has come in its fullness. For the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns.

Marriage of the Lamb Announced

The great multitude continues to rejoice and announces that the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. A marriage was the single greatest celebration and social event of the biblical world. There were three major aspects of the marriage:

1. The marriage contract or engagement was often consummated by the parents when the future spouses were still children. It was a legal binding agreement that could only be broken by divorce.
2. The presentation was a time of festivities just before the actual ceremony. When a couple had reached a suitable age, the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, would go to the bride's house to escort her to his home. Their future home had already been prepared.
3. The actual ceremony, during which the vows were exchanged and marriage supper was the final step of the marriage.

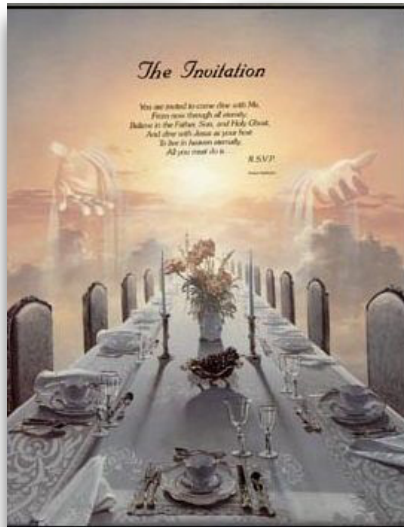
Ancient Marriage

Ancient Marriage Steps	Christ's Marriage to His Church
1. Marriage contract or engagement - betrothal	God chose the church before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). Individuals are betrothed to Christ at the time of initial salvation
2. Presentation of the bride & festivities. Their home would already be prepared.	Rapture of the Church. Christ meets His believers in the air & they are taken up to heaven with Him.
3. Wedding ceremony & marriage supper lasting for several days.	Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The final consummation will begin as Christ and the church take their places to reign over the earth (Rev 20:4-6) in the Millennial Kingdom & finally consummated in the new heavens and the new earth. The bride concept will be expanded to include not only the church, but also all the redeemed of all ages as the New Jerusalem becomes the bridal city (Rev 21:1-2)

The bride or church has made herself ready and is wearing fine, bright and clean linen. Having been presented glorified and spotless before God's throne, her righteous acts may be part of the reward given at the judgment seat of Christ.

Then an angel tells John to write down the fourth of seven beatitudes in Revelation. This is probably the same angel who has instructed John to write on several other occasions. So astonished that the angel has told John to write and that these are the true words of God, John mistakenly falls at the angel's feet to worship him. The angel reminds John that

he should worship God and that Jesus Christ is the major theme of the Scriptures and also the central theme of prophecy.



The blessing is given to those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Since the bride does not receive an invitation to her own wedding, the guests are not the Church. The guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb are the redeemed of all the ages who were saved before or after the church age. The Old Testament saints will be there as guests as will all the Tribulation saints, glorified and still alive on earth and entering the Millennial Kingdom.

At Jesus' Last Supper on this earth He said to His disciples, "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt 26:29). With the whole church glorified and united in the kingdom of God, Christ will take His seat with the saints and enjoy that long-anticipated face-to-face fellowship with those He loves.

The Second Coming of Christ

This time heaven opens not to let John in, but to let Jesus out. The time has come at last for the full, glorious revelation of Christ. Jesus is about to receive the kingdom that the Father promised Him. ⁴

The first time Jesus came to earth He appeared in obscurity. This time John sees Jesus in all His splendid glory and majesty:

- He is riding a white horse, the sign of victory or triumph. White also symbolizes the spotless, unblemished, absolutely holy character of Christ.
- His eyes are a flame of fire that will burn up all that is false as He gazes upon people's hearts and minds. This signifies the Lord's ability to see deep into hearts and deal with all injustice. Just as fire blasts through ore to reveal whether there is pure metal inside,



the eyes of Christ will do the same for people's hearts. He will pierce through the motives of nations and individuals and judge them for what they really are. ⁵

- He will be wearing many crowns which is the symbol of sovereignty. When Jesus came the first time, His enemies mocked Him by putting a crown of thorns on His head. This time his many crowns will point to the fact that no rule, might, or authority will be able to stand against Him.
- His robe is dipped in blood. Christ as the slain Lamb in Revelation speaks of redemption by blood; here blood represent divine judgment upon evil people.
- A sharp sword is flying from Jesus' mouth. The sword indicates that Christ's judgment on the wicked nations will be conducted not with physical weapons of mass destruction but with the one sure spiritual weapon - the Word of God.

His names are in keeping with the divine judgment that follows:

- Faithful and True - Our Lord never fails. He promised that one day He would judge the earth for its wickedness and His return demonstrates His faithfulness in fulfilling that promise.
- The Word of God - Jesus is a tangible expression of the invisible God incarnated in human form. He is the Creator of all. He is also the judge of all.
- A name on Him which no one knows except Himself. Jesus promised believers that He will give them a new name, "which no one knows but he who receives it (Rev 2:17).
- KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS - Of all the kings on earth, Christ is the King. Of all earthly lords or rulers, He is the Lord. Every knee will bow before Him when He returns to earth (Isa 45:23; Rom 14:11, Phil 2:10-11).

As Christ descended in the clouds, John quickly sees that Christ was not alone. The armies in heaven dressed in fine white clean linen were following Him on white horses. Although not specifically stated who is included in the armies that are with Christ, most commentators agree that the Church and holy angels will accompany Christ. Some state that the armies will also include the glorified Tribulation saints and the Old Testament saints.



Guaranteeing before the battle has started that the end result is certain, an angel invites the birds to assemble for the great supper of God to eat the flesh of the kings of the earth and their armies which had assembled to make war against Christ and His army.

The invitation of the birds to the great supper of God is in contrast to the invitation received by the saints, other than the church, to attend the marriage supper of the Lamb. There is a parallel to this scene in Matthew 24:28 where reference is made to the carcasses of those who fall in battle and the gathering of the birds to eat them.

There is evidence that a struggle is going on between the various segments of the world empire at the time of Christ's second coming; but with the appearance of the Lord in glory and His armies, these armies of earth forget their differences and join in battle against the King of kings and Lord of lords. ⁶

The beast and false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire and the rest were killed with Christ's sword which came from his mouth. The beast and the false prophet are the first to inhabit the lake of fire, which is eternal hell. Satan's masterpieces precede Satan himself to this final place of everlasting punishment. Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire a thousand years later (Rev 20:10). The rest of the evil dead will be judged at the great white throne and will follow the beast, the false prophet and Satan into this eternal doom.



Jesus speaks and all the armies are obliterated. The saints will come not to fight with Jesus, but to reign with Him. Just as He spoke the world into being, He will speak the evil out of the world. There will be no war at all, just a word spoken from Christ. And the vultures descend and cover the scene.

The brief but catastrophic day of the Lord will result in an unprecedented slaughter, with uncounted millions of dead bodies (14:20). Even after the birds have eaten, it will still take seven months to bury the bodies (Ezekiel 39:12). ⁷ This present age reveals the grace of God and suspended judgment. The age to come, while continuing to be a revelation of the grace of God, will give conclusive evidence that God will bring every evil work into judgment and that those who spurn His grace must experience His wrath. ⁸

The First and Second Comings of Christ ⁹

His First Coming	His Second Coming
Born in obscurity (Phil 2:5-7)	Seen by every eye (Rev 1:7)
Wrapped in swaddling clothes (Luke 2:7)	Clothed in a royal robe dipped in blood (Rev 19:13)
Surrounded by cattle (Luke 2:16)	Accompanied by the armies of heaven (Rev 19:14)
The doors of the inn were closed (Luke 2:7)	The doors of heaven will be opened (Rev 4:1)
Had the voice of a new born baby (Luke 2:12)	Will have a voice with the sound of many waters (Rev 1:15)
The Lamb bringing salvation (John 1:29)	The Lion bringing judgment (Rev 5:5)

Summary

We know from Rev 1:7 that all the world, both believers and unbelievers, will see Christ's second coming to earth. The whole heaven will be illuminated like lighting that shines from the east to the west.

According to Jude, Enoch was the first to predict the second coming of Christ (Jude 14-15). Daniel prophesied the return of the Son of Man (Dan 7:13-14), Zechariah predicted the final epic battle between Christ and the Antichrist at the end of the Tribulation, Jesus described the signs that will foreshadow His second coming, the angels in the book of Acts announced that Jesus would return (Acts 1:11), and Paul describes what the Day of Judgment will be like in 2 Thessalonians (2 Thes 1:7-10).

Although we do not know when our Lord's second coming will occur, we know where it will occur. He will stand on the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south (Zech 14:4; Acts 1:11-12).

Throughout the book of Revelation we have seen evil run rampant, inflicting unprecedented suffering and persecution on the faithful of God. For more than two thousand years God has mercifully waited to execute His justice. God in all His mercy has given sinners the opportunity to repent. In the last days He will send two miracle-working witnesses to warn of His coming wrath and then He will send an additional 144,000 witnesses to take the gospel to the whole world once more.

But on that day when He leaves heaven with His saints and angels, the era of His grace will end, and the hour of His wrath will come. This is the moment God's people have been

waiting for since Christ ascended into heaven. Christ returns to earth. It is the climax of God's judgment upon this wicked world.

The references to the Second Coming outnumber references to the first by a factor of eight to one. One out of every thirty verses in the New Testament teach us about the return of Christ to this earth. The return of Christ is taught in every single chapter of 1 and 2 Thessalonians, the first two books written for the early church. Jesus referred to His return twenty-one times. The Second Coming is second only to salvation and is the most dominant subject in the New Testament. Christ's second coming is not only the high point of Revelation, but the high point of all history.

You too can be counted in the armies of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at His Second Coming. Today, the invitation is still open to those who will receive the grace of God by trusting in Christ and being saved from entering this awful period that may be impending for this present generation.

"while it is said, 'Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me.'" (Hebrews 3:15, NASB95)

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NASB95)

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." (Romans 10:9–10, NASB95)