
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson #10 (18 March 2016): Revelation 18-19 The Marriage Supper of the Lamb: "Come out of her, my people"

David A. LeFevre – Adult Education Class – Snohomish Stake

INTRODUCTION: THE MARRIAGE SUPPORT OF THE LAMB (18:1 – 19:21)

Babylon has been promised that it will fall and fail; now we will witness the fulfillment of those words. Those who have believed in her and her power to make them happy will be astonished at her rapid and surprising fall, and will stand back as if to avoid the same fate. But they will not.

The Lord will host two meals: the first is the marriage supper of the Lamb which is the covenant celebration of the triumph of righteousness and truth; the other is the supper of the Great God where those who participated in the lifestyle of the great whore will share in her fate.

Each day we choose which feast we will be invited to. Which one are we choosing today?

OUTLINE

There are many ways to outline any book, and Revelation is no exception. Below are the eleven lessons in this series with chapter summaries. For the lesson in these notes, the chapter is broken down into more detailed sections and bolded.

1. The Majesty of Christ (1:1-20)
2. The Messages to the Seven Churches (2:1 – 3:22)
3. God and the Lamb
 - a. The Vision of Heaven (4:1-11)
 - b. The Sealed Book and the Worthy Lamb (5:1-14)
4. The Scroll Begins to Open
 - a. The Six Seals (6:1-17)
 - b. The Seal of the Living God (7:1-17)
5. The Opening of the Seventh Seal
 - a. The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets (8:1-13)
 - b. Two Trumpets and the Great War (9:1-21)
6. John's Mission; Two Prophets
 - a. The Little Scroll (10:1-11)
 - b. The Seventh Trumpet (11:1-19)
7. The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon
 - a. The Church and the Devil (12:1-17)
 - b. The Beasts of Revelation (13:1-18)
8. Judgment and Praise
 - a. The Winepress of the Wrath of God (14:1-20)
 - b. The Seven Angels (15:1-8)
9. Seven Last Plagues and Babylon the Great
 - a. The Seven Bowls (16:1-21)
 - b. Babylon the Great (17:1-18)
10. **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**
 - a. **The Fall of Babylon (18:1-24)**
 - i. **Babylon declared desolate (18:1-8)**
 - ii. **Lament for Babylon (18:9-20)**
 - iii. **Babylon destroyed (18:21-24)**
 - b. **The King of Kings (19:1-21)**
 - i. **Marriage supper of the Lamb (19:1-10)**
 - ii. **The Second Coming (19:11-21)**
 1. **Christ on a white horse (19:11-16)**
 2. **Destruction of the wicked (19:17-21)**
11. Heirs of the Celestial Glory
 - a. The Thousand Years (20:1-15)
 - b. The New Jerusalem (21:1-27)
 - c. Blessed Are They That Do His Commandments (22:1-21)

THE FALL OF BABYLON (18:1-24)

The imagery in this chapter is very similar to Jeremiah's description of the fall of Babylon (Jeremiah 50-51). This chapter is the beginning of the promised end of evil and the victory of the righteous. Three voices declare her destruction and call for the saints to stay away from Babylon completely. Several lists are presented to represent the various things that are lost to the wicked with the destruction of the city, those who suffer the losses, and the justification for God's judgment. The saints are called to come out and be separated, stay pure, and avoid the contamination of the whore with all of her worldly attractiveness and allure. This is all a fulfillment of the promise John received from an angel that he would witness "the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (17:1).¹

BABYLON DECLARED DESOLATE (18:1-8)

How could this happen?, wonders a weary world, or what's left of it after the days of the tribulation. The angel and the voice from heaven make the answer clear in these verses, with a final call for the righteous to leave Babylon and her sins behind.

18:1 **And after these things.** After John's vision of the destruction of the great city and the declaration of the fall of Babylon, the prostitute riding the beast, and the kings coming to war against the Lamb.

18:1 **another angel.** The first of three segments in this chapter—the first and third are angels (this verse and v. 21), the second a voice from heaven (v. 4).

18:1 **the earth was lightened with his glory.** Like Moses in Exodus 34:29-35, the angel glowed because he had just come from the presence of God; compare D&C 88:7-13. This is the only place in Revelation where an angel has glory; elsewhere it is always God or Christ.²

18:2 **he cried mightily with a strong voice.** The adjective "strong" is used in Revelation "of angelic figures who make significant statements."³ Though what he says has been said before, now he says it with finality; it is accomplished.

18:2 **Babylon the great is fallen.** The angel quoted Isaiah 21:9, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" and echoed Isaiah 13:20-22 where Babylon becomes uninhabited

and a place of wild beasts and "doleful creatures." See also D&C 88:105, "She is fallen who made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication; she is fallen, is fallen!" This is the second time the fall of Babylon has been declared in Revelation (also 14:8); in both cases the fall is being predicted as if it had already happened, though this time it is imminent.

18:2 **the hold...a cage.** The footnote for both says "ward, prison" but *phulakē* (same Greek word for both) can also mean 'guard tower,' as if they were poised and watching their prey, or guarding/standing sentinel. (Interestingly, the same word was used in Luke 2 of the shepherds "keeping watch over their flocks.") It also signifies Babylon's destruction as it becomes only a haunt or lodging for unclean birds, devils, and foul spirits.

18:2 **unclean.** Ceremonially impure, as in birds that are unclean in the Law of Moses.

18:2 **hateful bird.** "Hateful" is "detestable" (NIV) or "disgusting" (NAB), poetically linking to "foul spirit" as both birds and spirits reside in the heavens.

18:3 **nations...kings...merchants.** The three groups most affected by the fall of Babylon were the people who interacted with her—the political leaders who benefitted from their positions and the businessmen who profited from her. They are the ones who were seduced by her enticements.

18:3 **the abundance of her delicacies.** The allure of Babylon is how good it all looks, feels, and tastes. But God wants us to put him first. "Thus the energy and focus that belong only to the Father and Son are redirected to their chief rival for the affections of men. Sometimes we take too much pride in the ability to make money, to possess the delicacies that are ever available in the shops of Babylon."⁴

18:4 **I heard another voice from heaven.** Most of the chapter is this voice speaking to the world, the divine declaration for the justification of the judgement. The voice is likely Christ since it comes from heaven and references "God" in v. 5, referring to the Father,⁵ though some argue that it is an angel speaking God's declaration.⁶

¹ Osborne, 631.

² Osborne, 634.

³ Smalley, 443.

⁴ Wilcox, 259.

⁵ Draper and Rhodes, 1184.

⁶ Smalley, 446; Mounce, 327.

18:4 **come out of her, my people.** Separation of the righteous from the wicked is a common theme: Abraham, Joseph, Jaredites, Lehi, Nephi (from his brothers), John the Baptist, the Essenes, the Rechabites, and more. The voice says, 'Leave Babylon to avoid its sins *and* judgments' (as in those outlined in chapters. 8, 9, and 16). See Isaiah 48:20-22 (read the version in 1 Nephi 20:20-22) – come out with no regrets, no hesitation, with enthusiasm, not like ancient Israel did coming out of Egypt (Numbers 11:4-6). See also Isaiah 52:11; Jeremiah 51:6; D&C 133:5, 7, 14; and JST Matthew 16:25-29a (KJV Matthew 16:24-25, with footnote and appendix changes combined here):

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. **And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments. Break not my commandments for to save your lives; for whosoever will save his life in this world, shall lose it in the world to come. and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. Therefore, forsake the world, and save your souls.**

In a very practical sense, coming out of Babylon will also save the saints physically, for when the collapse comes, it will leave all those who have the mark of the beast without means to feed, clothe, shelter, or otherwise care for themselves. Only those who have heeded the words of the prophets and kept themselves clean and prepared will survive the day.⁷ See D&C 133:7, 14 – "Yea, verily I say unto you again, the time has come when the voice of the Lord is unto you: Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other....Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon."

18:4 **be not partakers of her sins.** Coming out of Babylon helps those with the Father's mark keep from committing sin, and relying on the Savior helps them be forgiven for any sins they committed while in the city; "When men and women forsake Babylon, God forgets they were ever there."⁸ Babylon represents all the temptations of the world, all the lies Satan creates to

deceive us, and all the apparent enticements of a sinful life. They all collapse as she falls.

18:4 **receive not her plagues.** Her 'stripes' or 'wounds,' that which is received as punishment for crime and sin. See also verse 8. The rest of the chapter describes the 'stripes' she receives.

18:5 **her sins have reached unto heaven.** The pile of her sins is so huge that it reaches up to the edge of heaven where God can witness them without any effort.⁹ Compare Jeremiah 51:9, "The judgment against her reaches the heavens, it touches the clouds" (NAB). It is also reminiscent of the tower of Babel trying reach the heavens (Genesis 11:4). The city has achieved that ancient desire, but only because of its vast number of sins and prostitutions.¹⁰

18:5 **God hath remembered her iniquities.** Because Babylon's sins "have reached unto heaven," they are brought before the tribunal of God, who now is mindful of them and is prepared to enter his final judgment.

18:6 **Reward her...and double unto her.** Perhaps just a double but the wording suggests a triple statement (one reward plus that reward given again doubled) that Babylon will be punished fully even as she punished others. Other triples in this chapter include:

- Three sets of "Alas, alas" (or, 'Woe, woe' (*ouai* in Greek) verses 10, 16, and 19).
- Three main groups – kings (9); merchants (11); and seafarers (17) who each mourn her passing but stand afar off and watch it happen without making any effort to help.
- Three plagues – death, mourning, and famine (8).
- Three rejoicers – heaven, apostles, and prophets (20).

18:7 **How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.** Or, 'As much as she has glorified herself and lived riotously, so shall torment and sorrow be given her . . .'

18:7 **she saith in her heart.** She is bragging, but she is wrong (she "glorified herself" in the first half of the verse). The imagery is from Isaiah 47:1-9; Babylon/the woman makes the declaration.

⁷ Draper and Rhodes, 1192-1193.

⁸ Draper and Rhodes, 1195.

⁹ Mounce, 327.

¹⁰ Osborne, 640.

18:8 **There shall her plagues come.** Because of her pride, riotous living, bringing others into sin, and more, she shall receive judgment and stripes for punishment.

18:8 **in one day.** ‘Suddenly;’ also verses 10, 17, and 19 use “one hour,” showing that the period of destruction equals her wicked reign (17:12). Many see a likeness to the destruction of Babylon while Belshazzar drank wine from Temple vessels and worshipped false gods, only to find his city taken overnight (Daniel 5).¹¹

18:8 **utterly burned with fire.** The ultimate destruction of an ancient city also characterized God’s judgment in the Old Testament; Babylon’s end comes not with a slow death by starvation or disease but by a full and quick conflagration.¹² See Genesis 19:24; 1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10-14; Isaiah 1:7; 5:24; 29:6; 30:30 (and many more); and D&C 64:24 – “For after today cometh the burning—this is speaking after the manner of the Lord—for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon.”

As noted in a previous lesson, the punishment for the daughter of a priest who committed adultery or harlotry was to be burned by fire (Leviticus 21:9)—a fitting match for what happens to the whore of the earth who prostituted herself for money and power and fame.

18:8 **for strong is the Lord.** Because of the might of the Lord, the judgment on Babylon can happen fast and thoroughly.

LAMENT FOR BABYLON (18:9-20)

Three groups who were most profited by Babylon’s wealth now bemoan her surprising (to them) destruction and how it has impacted their fortunes. They’re not so much mourning the loss of the city but the personal blow they are feeling as a result, losing their status, wealth, and markets. They watch the burning from what they think is a safe distance, wagging their heads. But Babylon’s fate will soon be theirs as well.

This section echoes Ezekiel’s lament over Tyre (Ezekiel 27), with fifteen of the twenty-nine commodities listed

in the two chapters (vv. 12-13 here and vv. 12-22 in Ezekiel) and many other similarities.¹³

18:9 **shall bewail her.** The “kings of the earth” who succumbed to her temptations and enjoyed her pleasures will wail loudly when Babylon falls.

18:9 **the smoke of her burning.** See 14:11. Like Abraham knowing that Sodom and Gomorrah had been judged by the Lord when he saw the cities burning “as the smoke of a furnace” (Genesis 19:28), so shall the kings lament when they see the smoke of the destruction of their city.

18:10 **Standing afar off for the fear of her torment.** The kings (and later the merchants in v. 15 and the sailors in v. 17) see the destruction but don’t dare approach it, for fear that they may suffer the same fate.

18:10 **Alas, alas.** Greek *ouai, ouai*, meaning “Woe, woe” (NIV, NAS). The angel in 8:13 gave the wicked three “woes” but Babylon only merits two from the kings, merchants, and sailors in this chapter. They are not moaning the city’s demise per se, but are “mourning their own downfall.”¹⁴

18:10 **in one hour is thy judgment come.** Verse 8 said it was “one day,” but the three groups of people lamenting for Babylon view it as even shorter—one hour (also vv. 17 and 19)

18:11 **merchants of the earth shall weep.** A concept from Isaiah 23:1-9 and Ezekiel 27:1-28:2, both writing about Tyre’s destruction; Ezekiel used same three groups (kings, merchants, sailors). Babylon could only attract people as long as she offered the latest and the greatest, the newest pleasures and comforts. But though they tried to be a good counterfeit, none of these sustain true happiness. It’s a deception, where the strategy is more, bigger, better, grander! In the end it all falls apart, and the truth is revealed.

Merchants were generally considered lower classes in Roman society, but they catered to the rich and upper class. Babylon promised them great wealth in their

¹¹ Smalley, 449.

¹² Draper and Rhodes, 1189-1190.

¹³ Mounce, 331.

¹⁴ Smalley, 451.

trade, and temporarily gave it to them. Now they are dismayed at their loss.¹⁵

18:11 **no man buyeth their merchandise any more.** Refers to 13:16-17 where previously no one could buy or sell without the mark/name/number of the beast. Now all buying and selling is ended because without Babylon, there is no market for the goods and services of those aligned with the beast.

18:12-13 **The merchandise.** In these two verses are seven groups of items, many of which were on the more expensive side and out of reach of the poor, intended to show the vast wealth Babylon had generated for her followers:¹⁶

1. Precious metals and gems (v. 12)
2. Expensive fabrics (v. 12)
3. Ornamental pieces (v. 12)
4. Aromatic substances (v. 13)
5. Food (v. 13)
6. Animals and transportation (v. 13)
7. People (v. 13)

The list contains a total of twenty-eight items, which is four (the world) times seven (perfection). The list represents all items in the whole world for sale. The purpose of the list is to demonstrate the vastness of the wealth of the city and her massive consumption.

18:13 **souls of men.** Babylon trades in many things, especially men's souls, which can only be surrendered and put for sale by the person him or herself!¹⁷

18:14 **thou shalt find them nor more at all.** The material things that the world valued so highly ("lusted after") are no longer available to buy and sell.

18:15 **weeping and wailing.** The merchants are devastated by their losses but it demonstrates their lack of belief and faith in God and whole commitment to the worldly standards set by the fallen Babylon.

18:16 **clothed in fine linen.** While the symbolic clothing of the city of Babylon represents her fine dress and wealth, many of the items also were worn by the Israelite high priest when he officiated in his office. Thus on Babylon, they represent her effort to be a false

priesthood to the masses who took the beast's mark and traded in her substance.¹⁸

18:17 **every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors.** The owners of ships and those who sailed them are the third group. They enabled the merchants by moving goods around the empire and brought the finer things to be sold to the upper classes. They, too, have lost their market.

18:19 **cast dust on their heads.** A symbol of great mourning (see Ezekiel 27:30), but here it is not the cry of repentance. Instead, they mourn the loss of worldly possessions and financial opportunity: 'How can I be happy now without all my belongings?' Babylon and the beast allowed them to freely buy and sell, and indeed was the major consumer of their goods. But their customer is gone and they're stuck with an excess inventory of now unwanted items.

18:20 **Rejoice over her, thou heaven.** Turning away from the mourning of the three groups, the voice commands four new groups—the heavens, saints (the word "holy" is a noun, not an adjective, and should be translated as 'holy ones' or 'saints'), apostles, and prophets—to be joyful and celebrate. Compare Jeremiah 51:48.

18:20 **God hath avenged you on her.** This completes the thought of verse 6 ("give back to her as she has given") and reminds us that the destruction of Babylon is as a result of her wickedness and the prayers of the martyrs under the altar (6:9-10).

BABYLON DESTROYED (18:21-24)

Putting a period on the sentence that Babylon is gone, these verses represent the speed with which the judgment happens, the things that are lost, and the main reasons Babylon merited such a punishment.

18:21 **no more at all.** *ou mē...eti*, 'not ever again,' emphasizing absolute finality, repeated six times in verses 21-23 (six highlighting the imperfection of Babylon). Note that while the previous verses watched the destruction from outside, 21-24 is a view from within.

¹⁵ Draper and Rhodes, 1205.

¹⁶ Osborne, 647; Smalley, 454, presents a slightly different organization but still has seven, with Mounce, 333, concurring.

¹⁷ Wilcox, 263.

¹⁸ Draper and Rhodes, 1211.

18:21 **a stone like a great millstone.** This was a boulder as big as a millstone (about six feet across and probably weighing at least one half ton),¹⁹ tossed into the sea to represent Babylon's sudden and violent end and her inability to recover. It is reminiscent of Jeremiah instructing Seraiah to take the list Jeremiah wrote of the evils of Babylon, read them outside the city, then tie them to a stone and throw them in the Euphrates River to symbolize its permanent destruction (Jeremiah 51:61-64).

18:22-23 **heard no more at all.** In these two verses is found five (representing man in his lost state) kinds of things that are seen and heard no more (compare Jeremiah 25:9-12; Isaiah 24:8; Ezekiel 26:13):²⁰

1. Music – celebration, games, theater
2. Craftsman – commerce and manufacturing
3. Millstone – food production
4. Light of a lamp – all nighttime activities
5. Voice of the bridegroom – weddings, festivals, close relationships and family

“The theme of these verses is that the punishment of Babylon fits her crime. As she has luxuriated in unfaithfulness, so now the luxury of the city, and indeed the normality of her daily life, will be seen no more.”²¹

18:23-24 **merchants...sorceries...blood.** These verses provide a summary of three reasons for Babylon's judgment:

1. The “merchants” show that personal fortunes were considerable and, by implication, the poor were neglected.
2. “Sorceries” is *pharmakeia*, magic but also medicine; Babylon deceived the world by trickery and drugs and made it think she was eternal, like God.
3. “The blood of prophets, and of saints” shows that there were martyrs then and now. In Hebrew thought and given the justice system of the day, murdered blood cried out for vengeance. See Jeremiah 51:49.

“The imagery surrounding Babylon has more to do with the wrong use of power...than with economic prosperity by itself. The luxuriously attired harlot of Chapter 17 becomes the deserted city of Rev. 18 as a result of the divine verdict on secular authorities (social, political, ecclesiastical, economic) which exist solely for themselves, and the inevitable downfall of an idolatrous human arrogance.”²²

THE KING OF KINGS (19:1-21)

Chapters 12-18 were really a step out of the flow of the book, examining certain aspects of the last days, the hand of God, and the efforts of Satan and his supporters. Starting with chapter 19, we return to essentially where we left off at the end of chapter 11,²³ and the rest of the book captures the ultimate and final victory of God over evil, death, and hell, starting here with the first of two meals to which the world is invited (hint: you want to go to the first one and stay away from the second one completely).

MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB (19:1-10)

John hears three ‘voices’ praising God—much people (verse 1); a group around the throne of the twenty-four elders and four beasts (verse 4); and a voice from the throne (verse 5). This is contrasted with the laments of the three groups (kings, merchants, and sailors) of

chapter 17. The voice calls all servants of God everywhere to join in the hymn.

19:1 **after these things.** After learning about the two women—the church of God and the church of the devil—the two evil beasts, all those who worship them and take the mark of the beast upon them, and the certainty of their destruction, now we are ready to hear a hymn of great praise.

19:1 **a great voice of much people.** All those cleansed by the Atonement of Christ; another allusion (also 7:9) to the vast numbers that will be saved.

19:1 **Alleluia.** Occurring four times in this passage (verses 1, 3-6) but nowhere else in the entire New Testament, this word is from the Hebrew *hālāl* and *yah*, meaning ‘praise Yahweh [Jehovah].’ It was used many times in the Old Testament but we miss it because it is

¹⁹ Draper and Rhodes, 1222.

²⁰ Mounce, 338.

²¹ Smalley, 463.

²² Smalley, 466.

²³ Draper and Rhodes, 1233.

often translated ‘praise the Lord.’ It is recorded four times here, signifying praise from all creation.

19:2 KJV	19:2 JST
2 For true and righteous <i>are</i> his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.	2 For true and righteous <i>are</i> his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his saints at her hand.

God’s “servants” (Greek ‘slaves’) are those who have his mark on their foreheads, who have given their lives over to him. The JST takes that relationship to the next step, making such people “saints” or those made holy before God by the blood of the Lamb. Note that the same change was made in verse 5.

19:2 **the great whore.** The woman riding the beast, Babylon, the whore of all the earth, in contrast to the bride we see shortly.

19:2 **avenged the blood.** One of John’s running themes is the avenging of the blood of those who gave their life for their testimonies of God, first mentioned in 6:10, then also in 16:6, 17:6, and 18:24.

19:3 **her smoke rose up for ever.** The incense in the temple rose up symbolic of ongoing prayer, while the smoke of Babylon’s destruction rises up forever as a testimony of her wickedness and God’s righteous judgment (see Isaiah 34:9-10).

19:4 **Amen, Alleluia.** ‘We agree—praise Jehovah!’ sing out the twenty-four elders and the four beasts. This is the last time we see these elders and beasts, who have been a constant presence around God’s throne throughout the book.²⁴ With this shout of Hallelujah they move on to their own glorious inheritance.

19:5 KJV	19:5 JST
5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants , and ye that fear him, both small and great.	5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his saints , and ye that fear him, both small and great.

²⁴ Mounce, 343; Smalley, 479.

²⁵ Draper and Rhodes, 1248.

See the note for verse 2 for this change.

19:5 **a voice came out of the throne.** We would tend to think this is Christ but it is a prophet, as we’ll see in verse 10.

19:6 **a great multitude.** The same group as in verse 1, with a combined voice so great that it is like “many waters” and “mighty thunderings,” which are also descriptions of the voice of God (1:15; 4:5; 8:5; 11:19; 14:2), signifying that the heavenly chorus has his authority and power as they speak.

19:6 **Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.** This is the core text (which also draws on 11:15 and 19:16) of the Hallelujah chorus, the concluding number from Part 2 (focused on the Passion narrative of Christ’s suffering and death) of Handel’s famous Messiah oratorio, originally composed as an Easter concert but now often performed at both Christmas and Easter seasons.

The tense of the verb “reigneth” “emphasizes the point at which an activity begins.”²⁵ In other words, though it has been declared for thousands (billions?) of years, it is at this exact moment that Jesus’ full reign as King of the earth begins.

19:7 **be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him.** Like 18:20, all are called to rejoice over the victory achieved by God and the Lamb, and we are commanded to give him honor (‘glory’, ‘brightness’, or ‘splendor’).

19:7 **the marriage of the Lamb is come.** The wait is over. This is the wedding, which in Jewish custom followed a year after the betrothal in which both parties pledged their full faithfulness but were not yet man and wife. Now the wait is over and they come together at last. Compare Ezekiel 16; Hosea 2; Matthew 22; D&C 33:17-18; 109:73-74. The marriage theme continues in chapters 21 and 22.

19:7 **his wife hath made herself ready.** The bride, who fled into the wilderness for protection from the dragon in chapter 12, has been faithful during the waiting period and is ready in every way for the marriage. This is the promise the bride made in several prophetic works, including Isaiah 54:6; Ezekiel 16:7; Hosea 2:14-23.²⁶

²⁶ Smalley, 482.

19:8 **to her was granted.** She is the worthy bride but still, it is “granted” to her, meaning ‘given,’ to receive the clothing. It is only through the grace of God and Christ that we have any righteousness attributed to us.

19:8 **the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.** Everyone wears the garment they wove for themselves out of their own lives. If we rely on Christ, give service, are righteous and obedient, full of humility and charity, we’ll wear fine linen, clean and white. If we rely on our own power, are selfish, impatient, angry, petty, proud, materialistic, or dishonest, we’ll be stripped naked like the evil whore. This interprets Isaiah 52:1, “put on thy beautiful garments.”

19:9 **Blessed are they which are called.** The fourth of the seven beatitudes in Revelation.

19:9 **the marriage supper of the Lamb.** Compare to Isaiah 25:6-9, where a feast of fat things is given to those who have waited for God and rejoice in his salvation, and to D&C 58:8-11, to which all nations are invited to the feast, but only “the poor, the lame, and the blind, and he deaf” will come in and eat.

19:10 KJV	19:10 JST
10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.	10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See not that I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The JST almost makes it sound like John should recognize the messenger or at least that the prophet possessed some sign or trait that should make John immediately recognize his identity. The same change is made in 22:9.

19:10 **See thou do it not.** This is the first of two instances where John falls down to worship the messenger (see 22:9). The holiness of the messenger from the throne of God is so great that John believes he is divine.

19:10 **the testimony of Jesus.** The testimony of the Savior is the spirit of revelation (see Jacob 7:11; Mosiah 13:33; and Alma 17:2-3). Interestingly, in Greek it says, ‘for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of *the* prophecy.’

In other words, one reading is that the spirit of John’s letter and the key message of the book is the testimony of Jesus, which is very true.

THE SECOND COMING (19:11-21)

This is the scene everyone has been waiting for, in John’s day and in ours. The Church has waited patiently in the wilderness and prepared herself for the wedding. Now the bridegroom comes—not as a humble sacrifice like he did the first time, but in the full power and authority of his status as Redeemer, Savior, King, and God.

CHRIST ON A WHITE HORSE (19:11-16)

The triumphal appearance of the King portrayed here is described in different detail in D&C 133:46-51, where he comes with dyed garments but also glorious apparel, mighty to save, eclipsing the glory of the sun, moon, and stars, treading the winepress alone, and trampling the wicked in the righteous anger of judgment.

19:11 KJV	19:11 JST
11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.	11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Joseph Smith carefully considered the italicized words in the Bible as he was engaged in his translation work. He clearly understood that they were meant to indicate additions by the translators to fill in for words not in the Hebrew or Greek. (All translations do that, it was just the custom of the KJV to call out such words.) This subtle but interesting change emphasizes that Jesus is now, not just was in the past, called by the names Faithful and True.

19:11 **And I saw.** This is a transition phrase, representing a new vision or a new experience within the previous vision.

19:11 **white horse.** The white horse is symbol of authority and victory, the opposite of the donkey on

which Jesus rode into Jerusalem just before his crucifixion (Matthew 21:1-1).²⁷

19:11 **Faithful and True.** Christ’s coronation names—his new names—also showing he is the perfect bridegroom. We’ll be given several of his names in these verses, each denoting aspects of his perfect attributes.

19:12 KJV	19:12 JST
12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.	12 His eyes as a flame of fire, and he had on his head many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but himself.

Again the Prophet was considering ways to reword the italicized words. The first “were” he deleted, actually doing some damage to the phrase by removing the verb, and the second he kept in the past tense but called out that “he had” the many crowns.

19:12 **His eyes were as a flame of fire.** Going back to 1:14, we come full circle on the symbolism of the Savior, whose very eyes reflect his authority to judge (the wicked, like Babylon, will be destroyed by fire).

19:12 **many crowns.** Greek *diadēmata polla*, the crowns of a king (as opposed to *stephanōs*, the victor’s wreath/crown); Jesus has received the crowns of all the kings of the world and now wears them King of kings. Unlike the dragon and the beast who had seven and ten crowns, the number on Jesus’ head is *polla*, so many that John cannot count them.²⁸

19:12 **a name written, that no man knew.** His name was not known, but is now revealed (verses 11, 13, 16). That he alone knew his name demonstrates that no one had power over him, that he stood alone and superior to all other beings except the Father on his throne, who gave him his name. Now reigning in absolute power, his names can be revealed because no one possibly can gain any power over him.

19:13 KJV	19:13 JST
13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.	13 And he is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

Like the change in verse 11, this bring this attribute into the presence tense.

19:13 **clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.** In verse 14, his armies are all in white, but he wears a red garment; see v. 15; 14:19-20; Isaiah 63:1-6; also D&C 133:26-52. The blood is not his but that of his enemies.²⁹

19:13 **The Word of God.** The Father’s messenger (*shaliah/spokesman/apostolos*), through whom he speaks to man. The title reflects both Jesus’ subservience and complete obedience to the Father and his own power—he speaks the words given him by God (John 5:19; 8:29; 14:10) and the universe obeys (John 1:1-5).

19:14 **upon white horses.** Like Jesus their master, his armies ride white horses of victory and purity, and also wear white garments washed in the blood of the Lamb (1:5; 7:14).

19:15 KJV	19:15 JST
15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.	15 And out of his mouth proceedeth the word of God, and with it he will smite the nations: and he will rule them with the word of his mouth: and he treadeth the winepress in the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The sword and the rod of iron do represent his speaking the word of God, which is made explicit in the JST, as is the surety of his triumph—he *will* smite the nations and rule them all.

19:15 **he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of the Almighty God.** Referring back to the red color of his garment; see 14:10 and 16:19, as well as Mosiah 3:25-26.

19:16 KJV	19:16 JST
16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF	16 And he hath on a vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF

²⁷ Wilcox, 274.

²⁸ Draper and Rhodes, 1269.

²⁹ Smalley, 491.

KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

The language of the KJV (and the Greek) implies that the name is written both on his garment and on his thigh. However, there is room for the Greek to say that the name was written on his garment where it covers his thigh.³⁰ The JST separates the presentation of the garment to John (he has a garment) and the notice that the name was written.

19:16 **on his vesture and on his thigh.** While a seemingly odd place to put the triumphant name, it makes more sense when you consider his position—riding on a huge white horse, the masses would see the name most clearly if it was written on his robe (to see it from the front) or his leg (to see it from the side as he marches past). Putting it on his thigh could relate to taking an oath (Genesis 24:2, 9; 32:25; 47:29). “That the name of the Messiah is to be found on his thigh suggests that the Warrior-King will carry out God’s promise to judge the nations by his victory over the enemies of righteousness.”³¹

19:16 **King of kings and Lord of lords.** The last name of Christ at his Second Coming, signifying his total victory over all earthly kingdoms and organizations, in contrast to the name of the whore (17:5).

DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED (19:17-21)

The marriage supper of the Lamb (verse 9) is the banquet to which you want an invitation. The supper of the great God here is the one to avoid.

19:17 **an angel standing in the sun.** He is above the air where the fowls dwell, so he is in a position to call to them all and have them hear him.

19:17 **all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven.** Goliath bragged that birds and beasts would eat David’s flesh (1 Samuel 17:44) but it was his own fate in the end. John’s imagery is also from Ezekiel 39:17-20; see also D&C 29:18-21 where flies are added.

19:18 KJV	19:18 JST
18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and	18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and

the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all ~~men~~, both free and bond, both small and great.

the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all **who fight against the Lamb**, both bond and free, both small and great.

The JST clarification that the flesh eaten by the fowls is not “all men” but those “who fight against the Lamb.” Interesting, the phrase “free and bond” as in the order of the KJV is only found here and in 13:16 in all of the scriptures (13:16 was not changed in the JST but retains the order “free and bond”). The reverse order, with “bond” first and “free” second, is found in four of Paul’s letters (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:11), six times in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 10:16; 26:33; Alma 1:30; 5:39; 11:44; 4 Nephi 1:3), and once in the Doctrine and Covenants (43:20).

19:18 **eat the flesh.** Unlike the marriage supper of the Lamb above, this feast is for the birds to eat the wicked themselves. The list of those on the menu, as it were, is in six groups: kings, captains, mighty men, horses, riders, and slaves and freemen/small and great. See also Ezekiel 39:17-20.

19:19 **the beast.** This is the beast of 13:1. Who is the “antichrist”? See 3 Nephi 11:28-30 (those who contend and need to settle everything by force) and 1 John 2:22 (he “that denieth the Father and the Son”).

19:19 **make war against him that sat on the horse.** The forces of evil will make one final attempt to win, but their fate is already sealed by the victory of Christ. The birds are ready and lined up to feast on them before the battle is even over.³²

19:20 **the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet.** The second and third members of the false godhead are easily captured: “no battle is described, for the struggle is over before it begins.”³³ They are cast into an eternal lake of torment by fire and sulfur by the power of the word of God (compare Matthew 25:41). With his ‘counselors’ taken care of, there is nothing left now to defeat but the dragon himself, which happens in chapter 20.

³⁰ Draper and Rhodes, 1276.

³¹ Smalley, 495.

³² Osborne, 670.

³³ Arnold, 357.

19:21 KJV	19:21 JST
21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.	21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which word proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

There are two instances of the word “sword” in this verse in English (only one in Greek, as the italics indicate in the KJV); the first is left unchanged in the JST, while the second becomes “word,” an interpretation of the imagery that started in chapter 1.

19:21 *slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse*. Though Jesus has a vast army of people on horseback with him, he wages the battle alone and thoroughly deals with his enemies without help from anyone. This symbolizes not only his power and authority but the uniqueness of his mission; we all watch him achieve victory on our behalf and can do nothing but praise him for it.

19:21 *the fowls were filled with their flesh*. After they were “slain” by the word of Christ, the carrion-eating birds filled themselves, picking clean their bones. Not being properly buried but being the meal of the birds and other wild animals was the final insult and humiliation of those who fought against God.

CONCLUSION

As the scenes of judgment in Revelation wrap up, we might cheer “Alleluia” just to have them over with. But these past several chapters have served many purposes, including making perfectly clear the rejection of God by the world, their following their own path of greed, lust, and pride, their giving dominance to the things of this world over the things of eternity, and their complete commitment to the dragon, his beast, and their false teachings.

On the other hand, we have seen glimpses of the righteous—suffering, struggling, but staying faithful. For a time it might even look like they cannot win against the forces of evil that so dominate the world. But with continual reminders and now moving into the final stages, John makes it clear that Christ has always been victorious and will one day move to make that clear to the whole earth. His powerful return to reign on the earth will be declared repeatedly and then suddenly there he will be, “as a thief in the night,” in full glory and authority. His defeat of evil, sin, death, and hell will be complete and eternal, represented by the supper of the great God where the enemies are consumed and their leaders are left in eternal torment.

The converse image is the marriage supper of the Lamb, where the bride who has prepared herself and stayed faithful and true to her betrothed is now ready for the wedding, the covenant of eternity that will bind her to the bridegroom Lamb that is Faithful and True. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world makes all this possible, and those invited to the wedding—all the faithful saints made holy by their faith in Christ—are given white robes cleansed in his blood and eternal, glorified bodies in which to spend their eternity praising the Father and the Son who have saved them.

Today we are not yet at the point where Babylon is destroyed. In fact, it is all around us. Elder Neal A. Maxwell stated that we cannot have our primary residence in Zion and keep a summer cottage in Babylon, or as some have put it, have one foot in God’s kingdom and the other in Babylon.³⁴ When we leave Babylon, “our cry must be ‘Alleluia,’ not ‘Alas, alas.’”³⁵ We have to choose whose kingdom we prefer and secure the name of our allegiance on our forehead. John pleads with us to choose well.

³⁴ https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/r-bruce-money_lords-country-kingdom-passport/; also Larry Gibbons, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2006/10/wherefore-settle-this-in-your->

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1992/04/be-men?lang=eng>.

³⁵ Wilcox, 266.

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 KJV – King James Version (Authorized Version)
 JST – Joseph Smith Translation
 BYU – BYU New Testament Rendition (from Draper and Rhodes)
 CJB – Complete Jewish Bible
 LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
 NAB – The New American Bible
 NASB – New American Standard Bible
 NIV – New International Version
 NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
 NLT – New Living Translation