

FPFWC Christian Development



Visions of Praise

November 2021

Fall Quarter

November 20, 2021

Lesson #3 – Marriage of the Lamb

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Revelation 19:1-8

ICE BREAKERS-

1. In what ways ought we to act as people engaged“ to Christ?

Key Verse- *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.— Revelation 19:7*

LESSON BACKGROUND –

A major figurative image throughout the book of Revelation is that of “Babylon” (see Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21; compare 1 Peter 5:13). John uses the image of Babylon to picture forces that oppose the will of God and oppose His people. We should note at the outset that the word *figurative* does not mean “not real” or “fictional”; rather, it means to express one thing in terms of another (examples: Matthew 16:5–21; John 16:25–30).

And so it is with the word *Babylon*. The actual city of ancient Babylon, so powerful during the sixth century BC, was a zero on the world stage of the first century AD. Apocalyptic literature (see Lesson Contexts of lessons 10 and 11) frequently uses vivid images to make a point, and the image of Babylon does just that. In John’s vision, Babylon symbolizes worldly powers that oppose God and His people.

Some scholars propose that, for John’s audience, Babylon was a code word for the city of Rome (compare 1 Peter 5:13). Both Rome and Babylon oppressed the people of God and opposed God’s rule. Centuries before the time of John, the Babylonians (Chaldeans) had been God’s instrument in punishing Judah (Jeremiah 40:1–3; Habakkuk 1:1–11; etc.). But the Babylonians went too far and ended up as objects of God’s wrath in turn (Jeremiah 50; Habakkuk 2:6–17). Babylon experienced divine wrath for opposing God in both word and deed.

Similarly, the Roman Empire was insatiable in its conquests as it enslaved peoples across the Mediterranean world of the first century AD. Palestine had begun to experience Roman might in 63 BC, when Pompey besieged Jerusalem. The Jewish revolt of AD 66–70 resulted in the sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of its temple. John wrote the book of Revelation some 25 years afterward.

Prior to today’s passage, Revelation 18 sketches a lengthy celebration of the downfall of Babylon, rehearsing charges against it. That prophetic text guarantees, by extension, the ultimate downfall of all kingdoms and entities that oppose God. Today’s passage takes us to what happens after the collapse of those foolish opponents.

LESSON COMMENTARY

19:1–5. After these things (v. 1) marks a return to time sequence in the vision and points to the celebrations that will take place after the destruction of Babylon and preceding the return of Christ. There are two celebrations—one for the destruction of Babylon (19:1–5) and one for the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:6–10). The fourfold use of **hallelujah** (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6) punctuates human and angelic celebration over the demise of the harlot. The word means “Praise Yah” (the contracted form of Yahweh, a name of God associated with His promise-keeping). He would be faithful to avenge cruelty toward His people (Dt 32:43). The Lord was praised for His attributes of grace, power, and glory.

19:6–10. The celebration would reach its apex as the **Lamb** prepared to take a pure bride in marriage (vv. 6–7). The Lamb was the focus of attention, but the bride was radiant in her beautiful dress. Its **fine white linen**, often used as a symbol for spiritual cleansing (Zch 3:1–5), stands for the faithful works of believers (v. 8). Although it is possible that the white garments represent imputed righteousness, they are more likely related to works flowing out of such righteousness. The bride **has made herself ready** for this day (v. 7). The exact identity of the bride, as well as the time and location of this event, is debated. It may be best to see the bride as the Church, with celebration initiated in heaven, but extending through the millennium on earth. Raptured believers will be joined later by converts from the tribulation and the millennial period. Believers should look forward with great anticipation to this celebration, and should be full of good works befitting their faith (Eph 2:8–10; Ti 2:11–14).

LESSON NUGGET – Sinners cry “Alas!” but saints shout “Hallelujah!” at the fall of the godless world system called Babylon. Sin has been judged, God’s servants have been vindicated, God has been glorified, and Christ is about to usher in His kingdom. Even as you anticipate these victories, by faith you can shout “Hallelujah!”.

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, Life Application notes, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary.*