

# Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the word of God

# 2021

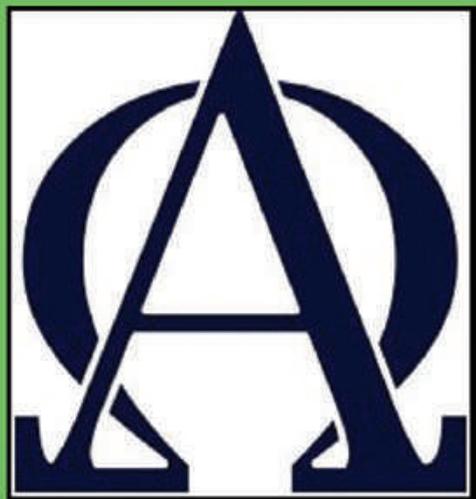
## AUGUST

## Revelation ~ Victory Book Chapters 12-22

**Introducing**  
Revelation 19: The triumph  
of the Lamb

**From Study Groups**  
Marriage of the Lamb; judgement  
of the Beast and false prophet  
(Rev. 19:6-21)

**Feature**  
Divine Sovereignty  
and human responsibility



Revelation 22:13

## REVELATION 19: THE TRIUMPH OF THE LAMB

When divine deliverance follows the Devilish oppression and darkness of the Beast's reign of terror, a spontaneous outburst of praise and worship is heard in heaven: 'AMEN; HALLELUJAH!' say the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures before the throne. The hearts of all who 'loved righteousness and hated iniquity' will rejoice with them, because the One who embodies 'truth and meekness and righteousness' (Ps. 45:4) has triumphed.

Those who refused to repent of their wickedness despite the awful plagues of the preceding chapters, have made themselves irredeemable because they so completely aligned themselves with Satan and rejected divine mercy. If such implacable enemies were spared, they would only continue to threaten and destroy the precious, beautiful things God has prepared for those who love Him.

From the sequence of events in this chapter (cp. vv. 1 & 11), we conclude that the marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven. This surely must happen after the judgement seat of Christ, (Gk: *bematos*, 2 Cor. 5:10), where our lives of service are assessed and rewarded accordingly. Once that solemn occasion has been dealt with we suggest, the Lord Jesus will then present the Church to himself in all her Christlike perfection, 'not having

spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing' (Eph. 5:27).

Next comes His descent to earth (vv. 11-16) as King of Kings and Lord of Lords: 'Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives' (Zech 14:3,4)

The armies of the world, gathered to 'war against the Lamb' at Har-Magedon (17:14, 16:16), are destroyed in an instant (v. 21), at the word of Him who 'has all authority in heaven and on earth' (Zech. 14:12; Mat. 28:18), and the beast and false prophet are summarily consigned to the lake of fire (v. 20).

The Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God who was slain for us, will then sit down to enjoy sweet marriage supper communion with His glorious Bride, sharing His joy with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and other Old Testament saints raised from the dead, at the inauguration of His thousand-year reign on earth. We can be certain that a paean of praise will burst from the hearts of Christ's blood-bought throng, never again to be suppressed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. 'Hallelujah for the Lamb, that was slain on Mount Calvary! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen!' (*PHSS* 73) *J.J.*

## *From Study Groups . . .*

### **MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB; JUDGEMENT OF THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET (Revelation 19: 6-21)**

**From Aberdeen:** John writes prophetically that the great harlot was ‘corrupting the earth’ (Rev. 19:2 NASB). We can think back to the corruption which pervaded the earth in the days of Noah. The longsuffering of God waited at that time before judgement fell (1 Pet. 3:20). In a similar vein we can recall how God’s judgement on the Amorites did not fall until their iniquity was full (Gen. 15:16). For thousands of years there have been corrupting religious doctrines and practices around the world. These corrupting influences upon mankind will reach their full extent in the coming religious mystery of Babylon the Great. All false doctrines and corrupting behaviours will find their place in the great harlot of the end times. It is significant that we read about ‘confusion’ and ‘demons’ in this coming apostate Babylon (Rev. 18:2). Mercifully, God calls His people out of her before judgement falls. Corruption is allowed to continue, but only for a limited time. When judgement falls on the great harlot the fitting response of those on God’s side will be a twice-over ‘Hallelujah!’.

Notably, Revelation 19 presents us with expressions of war, as there is imagery associated with war. The white horse, the armies, the sharp sword to smite the nations—such descriptions are clearly suited to dealing with the audacity of ‘the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies who assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse (Rev. 19:13).

The *Logos* that we find in John’s gospel and in his epistle is the exact same Greek word that we find here in our study. The Word, The Word of Life and The Word of God are consistently applied to Christ. The same majestic Son of God is seen leading the armies of heaven. To Him belongs the name ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS’.

*James Johnson*

**From Aberkenfig:** What a contrast! So different from the destruction of Babylon we have just witnessed in the closing portion of last month’s consideration of our subject. The praise that is offered to God must have been spectacular, yet it is not finished. As the marriage of the Lamb is come so all of heaven’s voices unite to praise God, the multitudes sounding ‘as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunders’ (Rev. 19:6 RV) [Comment 1].

God has truly ‘avenged the blood of his servants’ (v.2) at the harlot’s hands. Babylon is destroyed. The literal translation of the phrase ‘God the Almighty reigns’(v.6 ESV) is ‘the Lord God omnipotent has begun to reign’; but we do not

suggest that heaven's throne has been empty or inactive, because this is not the case. Revelation is 'the book of the throne' and omnipotent God has been accomplishing His purposes on earth.

We can hear the echo of the words 'The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice!' (Ps. 97:1). God has been reigning on the throne of heaven. He is now about to conquer the thrones of earth as well as the kingdom of Satan and the Beast. Now is the time for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The next few verses bring before us that the Bride has made herself ready. The marriage will take place in heaven, but the marriage supper is distinct from this and will take place on earth.

Concerning the first, the marriage in heaven. In his explanation of Ephesians 5:22-33 the apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that the Church (Christ's body) is the Bride of the Lamb. This follows on from the typology in Scripture of Adam and Eve, and other brides of the Old Testament. She is arrayed in fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen depicts the righteous acts of the saints, not the imputed righteousness of Christ, but the works or acts of righteousness carried out by the saints themselves. It will be observed that the 'Church' will have passed through the Judgement Seat and thus any unworthy, carnal works will have already been burned up (1 Cor. 3:15). There are no purple or scarlet garments as on the harlot of chapter 17, nor any gold, pearls or precious stones. It is in a garment of pure and bright fine linen, dazzling to every eye, in her glory, that Christ will 'present unto Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing ... holy and without blemish' (Eph. 5:27).

Concerning the second, the marriage supper on earth. John 1:10-11 states that 'He was in the world ... they did not recognise Him ... He came unto His own but they received Him not'. Israel rejected Him then just as did those in the parable in Matthew 22. They refused the invitation to the marriage supper, and in consequence the servants were told to go into, as it were 'the highways and byways'; the destruction of Jerusalem and killing of the murderous Jews having taken place in the year AD 70. [Comment 2].

The angel then says 'Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb ... (v.9). This great banquet will not be about the menu, (whether it is a sit-down multi-course dinner or extravagant buffet) but about the Master.

'... These are true words of God', whereupon John falls prostrate at His feet. Instantaneously the angel rebukes John, reminding him that he too was a fellow-servant of Jesus Christ. All praise was and is to be rendered unto God. Only the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the one true God in three persons, deserve our praise. The angel also turns John's attention to the One to whom the book of Revelation ultimately points. Indeed, the whole of Scripture has always pointed to

Jesus Christ, the 'spirit of prophecy'. All of the Scriptures centre on the One who is the Word (John 1). The 'spirit of prophecy' is thus another title of our Lord, though not generally listed as a title [Comment 3].

*Bill Paterson*

**From Buckhaven:** Revelation 19 opens with the sound of a great multitude saying: 'Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: For true and righteous are His judgments; for He hath judged the great harlot ...' (Rev. 19:1-2 RV). Their theme of praise continues as the twenty-four elders and four living creatures fall down before God in worship.

The theme of the song changes when John hears 'as it were' the sound of a great multitude singing 'Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice ... for the marriage of the Lamb is come ...' (vv. 6-7). The wife of the Lamb is made ready 'in fine linen, bright and pure' (v. 8). Planned in the dateless past, the freshness and beauty of the Bride is seen, mirrored in Christ, purchased at the Cross. The Bride, the wife of the Lamb, will ever be with Christ, reigning in unfading glory, a bride that can never be divorced, 'Meet companion for the Master, From Him, for Him made' (*PHSS* 431).

At Cana in Galilee there was first the marriage, then the marriage feast (supper). Thus, it is with the Bride of Christ: the marriage takes place in heaven but the marriage supper is on earth. It is the celebration of that wonderful union, when our Saviour will 'be glorified in his saints, and ... marvelled at in all them that believed' (2 Thes. 1:10). The marriage supper ushers in Christ's millennial reign and its joy will continue throughout. In the upper room, the Lord said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine 'until the kingdom of God shall come' (Luke 22:18). This will be fulfilled at the marriage supper. While Christ and His Bride take centre stage, many Old Testament saints will be raised to share their joy, including Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Mat. 8:11) and Daniel (Dan. 12:13).

The martyrs who 'lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years' (Rev. 20:4) are included in 'the elect' of Matthew 24:22 as well as the hundred and forty-four thousand righteous Jews from the twelve tribes of Israel, who preached the gospel of the kingdom (Mat. 24:14) and kept the testimony of Jesus, (Rev 7; 12:17). They will participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb. At that time the Lord will judge the living nations. Those on His right hand (Mat. 25:34) will also enter into the joy of that wonderful day.

When the Lord rode into Jerusalem on the colt, the foal of an ass, the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled; however, Zechariah 14:4-5, and Isaiah 63:1-6 also foretell His personal return to earth in judgement. Revelation 19 reveals the Son in power and glory, descending on the white horse in righteousness, to crush the enemies of Israel and deliver her from her darkest hour.

*Martin Notman*

**From Cromer:** *The marriage of the Lamb* For over 1500 years the Church (i.e. the Church the Body of Christ) has been identified with the Bride of Christ. The simile is used in many places, e.g., Ephesians 5:23-24. However, we must be careful in conflating these references: Revelation 19 refers to an event which is yet to take place, whereas the Church is at the present time the one who is the Bride (John 3:29). It seems to me that since the marriage supper of the Lamb follows the judgement of evil, the one derives from the other, and that those who participate will be those who have resisted the power of the Beast [Comment 4].

*The testimony of Jesus and the spirit of prophecy* Is this not simply saying that the essence of the declaration of the word of God is preaching who Jesus is? [See Comment 3].

*Relevant Old Testament prophecies* Much of the New Testament reveals to us the patience and forbearance of God in the face of extreme provocation from men, but even in the Old Testament He had exactly the same characteristics. He is described as 'But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness' (Psalm 86:15 ESV). However, God's forbearance is not unending; there will come a time when He exercises condign retribution against the forces of evil. Revelation 19: 11-21 describes His doing this. The King of kings will destroy the armies of the kings of the earth, as Isaiah had prophesied: 'There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked' (Is. 11:1-4).

*Peter Hickling*

**From Greenock:** The Western world has a different tradition for the wedding ceremony than that of the Middle East and India. I witnessed the start of a wedding in India. The bridegroom's departure to go for the bride. A loud band, dancers, people with torches to light up the area, floodlights from a vehicle behind the carriage, family and friends of the bridegroom formed a procession on the street outside his house. He emerged and was seated in a magnificent horse drawn carriage with an older person, who I think was his father. With great pomp and ceremony, the 100m. long procession, ablaze with lights, set off slowly for the bride's house with the band playing as loudly as they could. It was just before 11:30p.m. The timing fitted the 'parable of the ten virgins' exactly (Mat. 25:1-13). Later on, he would return home with his bride.

Like the procession of light in India, this Marriage will be filled with light and radiance. The Bride—the body of believers, is arrayed in spotless white. The Groom is the ‘Light of the World’ (John 1:4; 8:12). Their coming together will be a dazzling event.

*Where* The marriage will take place in heaven. It is the Bride’s abode after the rapture and also the Groom’s house—the Father’s house (John 14).

The purity of the Bride is touched on by Paul (2 Cor. 11:2). This verse makes the relationship absolutely clear. The Bride is arrayed in pure linen. This is the righteousness which is by faith (Phil. 3:9 [which is righteousness imputed through faith belief in the person and work of the Saviour, e.g. Rom. 4:3, 5-6. *Eds*]; in addition are the righteous acts prepared for the believers to do after salvation and before death or the Rapture (Eph. 2:8-10; 1 Thes. 1:3). These works are not for salvation but are the good works prepared for the saved to do. As these are rewards, the Judgement Seat of Christ must have happened (2 Cor. 5:10).

Those present at the separate marriage supper on earth include Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—representing all the O.T. saints whose faith was counted to them as righteousness. They were set free from Upper Sheol when Christ rose from the dead (Eph. 4:8). Looking on like witnesses are the angelic host of heaven.

*When* These events can be narrowed down to a time after both the Rapture and the Judgement Seat of Christ for the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7), and after the coming of Christ as Son of Man when He appears on a white horse leading the armies of heaven for the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9).

Thank God we are on the Lord’s side, i.e., the winning side!

*Steve Henderson*

**From Halifax:** *Babylon’s fall* Revelation 19 opens with the words, ‘And after these things’ (v. 1 KJV), which expression, says Robert Armstrong, ‘helps us to see where this great event comes in the prophetic scheme’ (*The Finger of Prophecy*, 1976, p.17). Judgment had come on the great city of Babylon (18:8) and, although on earth there was much weeping, in heaven there was great joy—‘Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her’ (v. 20). This astounding episode warrants the four-times declaration ‘Alleluia’—an emphatic expression of joyous praise of God (19:1,3,4, 6).

*The Bride adorned* Now had come the marriage of the Lamb (v. 7); the wife to be was readied, and there was exceeding gladness. To the Bride was granted that she be arrayed in fine linen or ‘byssine’. Dr. John Gill relates that the ‘byssus’ of which fine linen was made is said to grow on a tree and was brought out of Judea into Egypt, which the Egyptians used in most of their holy things (*Exposition of the Entire Bible*). Whatever the material ‘fine linen’ was, it is here used to represent

the righteousness of the saints, i.e., their 'righteous acts' (v. 8 RV). The angel instructed John to write, 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb', and gave testimony that he related the 'true sayings of God' (v. 9). Here John fell at this angel's feet to worship— 'a mistake' says Adam Clarke, 'the angel very properly corrects, showing him that it was from God alone this intelligence came' (*Commentary on the Bible*). Then, John sees a further vision, the heaven opened from which came a white horse ridden by 'Faithful and True' to make righteous war. Clothed in vesture dipped in blood, 'The Word of God' (see John 1:1-14) trod the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of the Almighty (Rev. 19:15; cp. Is. 63:3). By the loud cry of the angel standing in the sun, we are brought to the scene of horrifying feats and its awful invitation. 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth' (Ps. 2:10).

However, what an absolute contrast is this to the marriage supper of the Lamb!  
*Robert J. Butler*

**From Mount Forest:** Revelation 19 introduces the marriage event prior to describing the Lamb's victory. The vision may, however, be a preview here with the marriage and feast actually occurring only when the Bride comes down from heaven, then depicted as a city (Rev. 21). The account immediately reverts to the consummation of the fall of Babylon in the return of the Son of Man (Rev. 19:11-21). A similar previewing approach occurs in e.g., Rev. 14:8ff [Comment 5].

If seeing Rev. 19:7-9 as coincident with Rev.21 is correct, one of the main arguments proposed against Israel being the Bride falls away, for their faithful dead will be raised before the time of Rev. 21 (see Mat. 25:31; Rev. 20:4-6; Dan. 12:1-3, etc.). Is bodily resurrection a prerequisite to be part of the Bride? The souls of the Old Covenant righteous dead would have enjoyed the fulfilment of Eph. 4:8-9. We know from Rev. 6:9; 14:4-5 that even before resurrection a spiritual role can be played by souls in heaven (new bodies may be most needed for service on the new earth). Calvary justification addresses failure under the Old Covenant relationship (note Hos. 2 and 14). However, the Bride's adornment of righteous deeds indicates judgment is past [Comment 6].

Many see the Body as the Bride of the Lamb because of allusions to a marriage in 2 Cor. 11 and Eph. 5. In the former, Paul in metaphor has betrothed the church of God in Corinth to Christ as a pure virgin. To see this as an allusion to the future marriage of the Lamb will result in confusion between the church the Body and individual churches of God. The purpose of Paul is to urge ongoing purity, which is not at risk for members of Christ as such, but is a concern in the conditional aspect of a church of God.

In Rev.19 a wedding event is mentioned. However, Eph. 5:21-33 is not a picture of a wedding day but ongoing marriage responsibilities, showing the Body

as always in subjection to its governing and loving Head, and depicting the proper relationship of wife and husband. Once-for-all sanctification and cleansing of the Body are already achieved (Eph. 5:26; cp. John 13:10; Heb.10:22). The terminology of Christ 'presenting' the church to Himself may thus be like Eph. 1:4 (cp Col. 1:22-23), a current reality. The phrases: 'so that He might sanctify...present...be holy (Eph. 5:26-27 ESV), do not employ future tense [Comment 7].

If the Body is the Bride, must its members be removed from the Christ prior to marriage to the Lamb? Otherwise, they would be Bride and Groom simultaneously. Eve is a difficult precedent, as she had no separate significant existence prior to her marriage union with Adam, whereas we were 'in Adam' and are now already (and for evermore) united with the Head, in Christ', and do not await a future marriage to become 'in Christ' or one with Him [Comment 8].

If those from former covenants are united to bring them all under the eternal covenant, then marriage is a good simile. The guests could then be the faithful of the living nations, and the dead who are judged at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:12-15), but whose names are found in the Lamb's Book of Life. John 3:29 mentions a bride (but without identifying her) and the friends of the bridegroom could perhaps be examples of the guests, having a place of service and blessing on the new earth (Rev. 22:14). Marriage pictures a uniting event; the city, a united ongoing relationship in service. Obviously, this explanation fails if the marriage occurs before the Millennium. But it is hard to see how the culmination of the purposes of God so well depicted here could be finalized prior to the Millennium [Comment 9 & , Comment 10].

*Geoff Hydon*

**From Ravulapalem:** *Marriage supper of the Lamb* The marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper are two occasions in different times and places.

*Where* The marriage supper takes place on the earth whilst the marriage of the Lamb occurs in heaven.

*When* The marriage supper or feast will be at the time of the second coming of Jesus to earth. 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb' (Rev. 19:9 ESV) is another beatitude revealed here in addition to the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount (Mat. 5:3). Here it is recorded as the fourth of the happinesses in Revelation.

*Invitees* All the people in the world are not invited to the supper. Many will refuse or reject this invitation. The centurion is the first one outside the Jews; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the ancestors, people from all the four sides: East, West, North and South (Mat. 8:11 and Acts 1:8). This call is a special invitation from heaven for the people who have accepted it on earth (Mat. 22:2-7). [Comment 11]. The

people will attend with marriage dresses of royal robes. It is noticeable that a person without marriage dress is thrown out in Jesus' parable in Matthew 22 referred to above. Also, the five wise virgins should be remembered from the parable of the Lord in Matthew 25 They were taken into the inn when the bridegroom came and those five who were unready were rejected. The words of the angel that these are the true sayings of the Lord mean 'genuine' or 'dependable'. Since these are from the Lord they are faithful and reliable (Rev. 21:5; 22:6).

Down through the centuries Jesus has made loving preparation for His own celestial marriage to His bride. The bridal party's attire or robes are the just acts of the saints, those who obeyed the call of the gospel and are clothed in His righteousness. These are the true words of God. *S.J.M. Edward*

**From Surulere:** The centrality of the Lord Jesus to the entirety of God's divine plan is a theme that reverberates not only in time, but will in eternity too. The exhilarating mystery of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8 NKJV) gathers refreshing pace at the dawn of creation at man's darkest hour, when God announced the glorious news: 'And I will put enmity, between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel' (Gen. 3:15). And therein started the testimony of Jesus and in the symbolism of the animal slain to clothe Adam and Eve, a foretaste of the good things to come: 'Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed them' (Gen. 3:20).

Arguably, when men began to call on the name of the LORD in the days of Seth and his son Enosh, memories of that promise of the woman's Seed in Eden would have weighed on their minds. Enoch, who enjoyed the rarest privilege of walking with God and was taken away, had an awe-inspiring insight into the testimony of Jesus Christ whilst under the spirit of prophecy: 'Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men, also saying, "Behold the Lord comes with thousands of His saints, to execute judgement on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him"' (Jude v. 14-15).

Through the deep darkness and evil that culminated in the flood, Noah was acclaimed a preacher of righteousness: 'and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly' (2 Pet. 2:5), and also 'By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith' (Heb. 11:7).

The apostle Peter gave a valuable description of the connection between the testimony of Jesus and the spirit of prophecy thus: ‘Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which have now been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; things which angels desire to look into’ (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

Probably, the voice which stopped John from worshipping him was an angel, fully conversant with the testimony of Jesus and the spirit of prophecy, even if he could not comprehend the same (Rev. 19:10). It was the testimony of Jesus by the spirit of prophecy that Job declared: ‘For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God’ (Job 19:25).

King David too testified by the spirit of prophecy: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’ (Ps. 110:1). The prophet Isaiah gave undoubtedly the richest testimony of Jesus by the spirit of prophecy: ‘For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given...’ (Is. 9:6). ‘All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way, and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all’ (Is. 53:6). Now, and in that future dispensation, the devil will seek to war against those that keep the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 12:17).

*F. Ntido*

**From Victoria B.C.:** Where and when is the marriage supper of the Lamb, and who will be invited? If the pre-tribulation Rapture is how the correct line of history is to unfold, then this marriage would be taking place in heaven prior to the Lord Jesus returning to earth at the Mount of Olives [Comment 12]. Some of the invitees are mentioned in Matthew 8:11, namely Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus foretold this event after dealing with the centurion’s servant and marvelling after the faith the soldier had. There was none like it in Israel. He followed it up by mentioning many coming from the east and west, referring to Gentiles, and the ones that were currently in His kingdom— the Jews—would be cast into outer darkness [Comment 13]. We can only speak in general terms as the prophet Daniel seems to indicate Old Testament saints would not be resurrected until later on at the end, unless he was referring to the end as in ‘the end times’ [Comment 14]. Believers in Jesus have His testimony in their hearts. We are to be like the Israelis that came out of Egypt and immerse ourselves in Scripture so we can give an account of the hope that lies within the believer (1Pet. 3:15).

Scripture indicates that soon after this wonderful wedding celebration, the Lord Jesus Himself will come to this earth, touching down at the Mount of Olives. He is the 'stone cut out without hands' who will completely eliminate the kingdom of this world and all the previous world empires that have come and gone (Rev. 12:15). Will the memory of them be erased from our history books? Time will tell. There will be no place found for them. This judgement by the Lord Jesus is going to be gory. In Isaiah 63:1-6 a scene is described of what is most likely Jesus returning from the winepress of the wrath of God. Zechariah 14: 1-5 describes Jesus coming to the Mount of Olives and going out to battle against the armies of all nations that have been drawn to Jerusalem. Verse 12 of the chapter indicates the death these nations' soldiers will experience. Melting eyes and flesh are involved. Scary stuff!

Jesus will set up His millennial kingdom, and whereas the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride were not heard in the final Babylonian kingdom, as it was a dark kingdom, Jesus' kingdom is full of light and promise. It will be full of the voice of the bridegroom.

*Rodger Lefevre*

## COMMENTS

**1. (Aberkenfig):** In the sounding of praise from the heavenly host, comprising both angels and the redeemed, there is a wonderful unison of voice that is voluminous and euphonious, giving glory to God and to the One who is King of kings and Lord of lords. To think we are part of that is simply overwhelming.

*R.B.F.*

**2. (Aberkenfig)** The application of the punishment of verse 7 of the parable to the events in AD 70 is agreed. But that does not carry over to the dispensation of the Lord's return to earth. Then, a restored Israel is as much included in the invitation to the marriage supper as the Gentiles.

*P.D.*

**3. (Aberkenfig):** It would be difficult to substantiate 'spirit of prophecy' (v.10) as a title of the Lord Jesus; its meaning more conveying the fact that all prophecy in Scripture is centred on the Lord Jesus and has its origin in Him, as you specify in your penultimate sentence.

*R.B.F.*

The New Living Translation says, 'the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus' (Rev. 19:10 NLT). While this reading supports the meaning suggested in Cromer's paper, para 2., the more literal translations are faithful to the original Greek: e.g., 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' (Rev. 19:10 R.V.). or, J.N. Darby: 'the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.' (Rev. 19:10 DBT) I prefer John Miller's explanation: 'what Jesus testified was in its

nature and meaning prophecy.’ (Notes on the Epistles, John Miller p 695, para. 2)  
*J.J.*

**4. (Cromer):** The general understanding of verses 7-8 of Revelation 19 in ‘Christian Brethren circles’, for want of a better expression, is that the Bride of the Lamb, who is now about to become the ‘Wife of the Lamb’ following marriage, can only be ‘the Church, the body of Christ’, comprising believers in the present dispensation of grace, who are members of His body. In Ephesians 5:27 the picture is one of a wedding taking place in heaven where the bride, unlike most marriages in the western world, is presented by none other than the bridegroom Himself, the Lord Jesus, to be united fully at last to Him. John the apostle, in his vision, is invited to view ‘the bride, the wife of the Lamb’, and later hears the voice of the Spirit of God and those who belong to Christ, and long for Him, pleading for His return (Rev. 21:9; 22:17).

On the other hand, the marriage supper of Revelation 19:9 has more of a linkage with the two parables of Matthew 22 & 25, which have clear overtones of a setting on earth after the Lord’s coming as Son of man where judgement is enacted swiftly on those who spurned the invitation to the marriage feast (Mat. 22:2-4; 25:10). They are clearly different events in different time periods.

**5. (Mount Forest):** I cannot see the bride, the wife of the Lamb being the holy city of Jerusalem in Revelation 21:9-10, when elsewhere it is indisputably identified as the church the body of Christ, of which believers are members (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27, 29-30). What can be seen is John being invited to witness the Lord’s marriage partner having a part and place in the beautifully prepared heavenly city, new Jerusalem, now fitted perfectly to occupy a place of grandeur in the new earth.  
*R.B.F.*

It seems to me that flashforwards and flashbacks, are better analogies than previews for the way in which the narrative in Revelation moves between different scenarios.  
*J.J.*

**6. (Mount Forest):** Following the argument in the above Comment, Israel is not the Bride. Being individual members of the church which is Christ’s body is alone needed for being part of that unique spiritual organism (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12).

**7. (Mount Forest):** While the aorist tense is present in the verbs employed in verses 25-27, actions already accomplished, the ‘should be’ in the latter part of verse 27 is in the present tense, and is looking at something now standing as finalised, viz. a bride fully ready and prepared to be joined in one flesh to her bridegroom (Eph. 5:31).

**8. (Mount Forest):** Although each member of the Body is spiritually 'in Christ' and indissolubly and interdependently linked with every other member – 'fellow-members'; 'members of one another' (Eph. 3:6; see also Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:15-25), what indescribable pleasure it will be for the Lord to see us all as 'one'. He shall be literally 'filled to satisfaction' (Is. 53:11).

**9. (Mount Forest):** With victory achieved and conquest completed over those who so foolishly made themselves enemies of the Lord God Almighty (Ps. 2:1-2,9); the Beast and his cohort, the false prophet, consigned to everlasting woe, what better conditions could obtain for the inauguration of the millennium of peace (cp. Mat. 25:34; Rev. 20:4)? *R.B.F.*

**10. (Mount Forest)** It is clear that much of what our esteemed correspondent suggests in this paper is a radically different interpretation of the composition of the Bride and the sequence of events as understood by the majority of the Bible students and teachers, whose valued teaching we are fortunate to have in the pages of this magazine and our sister publication, Needed Truth. A good starting point for further research on this sublime subject, would be the indexes of those publications, available in our online archives at: <https://churchesofgod.info/publications>. *J.J.*

**11. (Ravulapalem):** It would be correct to say that those who reject the gospel of God will be denied the privilege of being present at the marriage supper of the Lamb; It would also be correct to say that all the people in the world are invited to put their trust in the Word of God but some of those who accepted that invitation, (for example, the Queen of Sheba or the men of Nineveh), will be raised from the dead at the Great White Throne *after* the Millennium and therefore will not be present at the marriage supper. *J.J.*

**12. (Victoria):** The location of the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place on earth, whereas the marriage of the Lamb will be in a heavenly setting; the Lord with His bride, the church which is His body (see Comment 4).

**13. (Victoria):** The sons of the kingdom will comprise not only Jews but Gentiles too, from all points of the earth, who have refused the pleading of divine overtures of grace. They are described as workers of iniquity (Luke 13:27-29; see also Matthew. 22:11-13; Luke 14:16-24).

**14. (Victoria):** Daniel 12:2-3, Isaiah 26:19; John 5:29 and Acts 24:15 herald the resurrection of Old Testament saints to eternal life and glory. *R.B.F.*

# Feature

## DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY (Continued)

### 6. Doctrine of Theological Determinism

(i) This doctrine in its main strand holds erroneously that from eternity God has foreordained everything which takes place / comes to pass. Man is a mere plaything in God's hand, with his actions and choices all predetermined. While not asserting that God is the author of sin, it claims He has been responsible in His determinate will for the introduction of sin, and also the reprobation of man (the belief that a sinner who is not of 'the elect', is predestined to damnation).

No one would question that God has everything completely under His control. This has been described as different aspects of the divine will: the one 'determinative', prearranging some things; the other 'permissive', allowing certain things to happen.

#### Some scriptures affirming certain truths of God's 'Predeterminism':

Romans 8:

28 'And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose'.

29 'For whom He foreknew, He also **foreordained** (AV: **predestinated**), to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren'.

30 'and whom He **foreordained**, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified'.

Gk. *proorizo* (*pro* = before; in front of; prior; *horizo* = determine; decree beforehand; mark out; set limit; horizon).

All verbs in verse 30 are aorist indicative active (action not continuous).

In vv. 28, 30, the Father is determining and working;

In v. 29, the Son is blessing;

In v. 26, the Spirit is interceding ('the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us').

In Ephesians 1:5: 'predestinated' (AV) is *proorizo*; in RV 'foreordained'

**N.B.** To reiterate (as covered in 5), foreordination / foreknowledge and predestination in Scripture is always unto salvation and not unto perdition. The word 'knowing' in this context denotes a previous uniting of oneself with someone. This knowledge and predestination is active in the mind and will of God prior to its manifestation in history, **resulting in salvation but not in perdition**. The salvation of every believer is known and determined in the mind of God before its actual accomplishment in a historical setting. The important matter is not the emphasis on who are the objects of this

predestination, but what they are predestined to, viz. salvation, adoption and glory (see **COMMENTS 7 & 8 BS** February 2021, pp. 30-31).

**Quotation:**

*John H. Johnson* (a respected teacher in the Fellowship):

‘No one will ever be able to say to God, “I never had a chance, because I was predestined to the lake of fire”’.

**(ii) Reprobation**

The belief that God has ordained or determined certain human beings to eternal perdition, just as He has undoubtedly ordained others to eternal life (Acts 13:48). This teaching surfaced in the writings of Augustine (354 - 430 AD), Bishop of Hippo, who said ‘Reprobation is to be distinguished into negative and positive acts: the negative is God’s will in **not** saving men; the positive is His will of selecting men for damnation’. He averred that God plans in every detail all that He will do and carries it out exactly as planned. Choices and actions of human beings are therefore foreordained by God.

*John Calvin* (1509 - 1564) argued that Man’s destiny to heaven is through election; or to hell through reprobation. One quotation from his writings is ‘He ordains eternal life for some and eternal damnation for others’. He makes reference to ‘limited atonement in that Christ died only for the elect’. This is nothing less than a devaluation of the work of Christ. The deep desire of Deity is that all, not just certain types of people, should be saved eternally. Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:4, 6). The efficacy of the Lord’s work on the cross can never be circumscribed or limited in any way. This pernicious doctrine gained ground in the established Church of England but was bitterly opposed by *Jacob Arminius* (1560 - 1609), who stated ‘God freely wills the salvation of all men on the condition that they believe (in Christ). He does not forcibly convert men, but rather moves them by sweet and gentle persuasion; a persuasion applied to all. The choice of being persuaded, or rejecting God’s advances, lies with men’. The answer lies in Romans 9:14: ‘Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.’

**7. Doctrines of Truth**

**(i) Divine Sovereignty**

**O.T. verses & passages to consider:**

Exodus 9: 12-16: Lord’s dealing with Pharaoh in raising him up to the throne and hardening his heart against God’s people (verse quoted in Rom. 9:17)

Job 9:12: No one can question God’s actions

Isaiah 45:9: The futility of arguing against God the creator and maker of all (verse quoted in Rom. 9:20)

Jeremiah 18:6-10: The Lord’s decrees for nations which can be reversible dependent upon their responses to Him.

Daniel 4:17, 32; 5:21: God's rule in the world and His appointment of earthly legislators

### **N.T. verses**

John 6:70; 13:18; 15:16: The Lord Jesus' choosing of His own; not their choosing of Him

Acts 2:23: God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge in respect of the crucifixion

Acts 18:10: The Lord indicating to Paul in a vision that He had 'those who were His' in Corinth of Greece before the gospel was taken to that city

Romans 8:29-30: '... foreknown ... foreordained ... called ... justified ... glorified'

Romans 9:11: Jacob chosen; Esau rejected – the purpose of God according to election

Romans 9:23: Vessels of mercy, afore prepared unto glory

Romans 11:2: '... His people which He foreknew ...'

Romans 11:7: '... but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened'

1 Peter 1:1-2: '... sojourners of the Dispersion ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ...'

### **(ii) Human Responsibility**

Gen. 6:3: 'My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever'

Num. 21:8-9: 'Every one that is bitten (by the serpent), when he sees it shall live ... when he looked ... he lived'

Josh. 24:15: 'Choose you this day whom you will serve'

Ps. 40:4: 'Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust'

Is. 1:18: 'Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord'

Mat. 11:28: 'Come unto Me, **all** you that labour ... and I will give you rest'

John 3:16: 'loved **the world** ... **whoever believes** ... have eternal life'

John 3:17: 'but that **the world** should be saved through Him'

John 5:24: '**The person** that believes has eternal life'

Acts 10:43: '**Every one** that believes (*pisteuo* - to have faith, credit) on Him shall receive remission of sins'

Acts 17:26-31: 'And He made of one every nation of men ... that they (all men) should seek God ... commands men that they should **all** everywhere repent'

Rom. 10:9 - 14: '**Whosoever** believes'; '**whosoever** shall call'

Rom. 11:23: 'continue not in their unbelief'

Rom. 11:30: 'disobedient to God'

Rom. 11:32: 'For God has shut up all to disobedience, **that He might have mercy upon all**'

1 Cor. 1:21: 'the thing preached to save them that believe'

1 Tim. 2:4: 'that **all** should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth'

1 Tim. 2:6: 'Who gave Himself a ransom for **all**'

1 John 2:2: 'He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, **but also for the whole world**'

1 John 4:14: 'The Father has sent the Son to be the **Saviour of the world**'

**Quote:** *'The good news of the gospel is exclusive with respect to the means of salvation and access to God, but all-inclusive with respect to its availability and attribution.'*

## 10. Quotes from esteemed Bible teachers

### Quotes:

*John Miller:*

'Divine election staggers the human intellect, which is ever ready to reply against God'

'God's choosing never means that He fits some of His creatures for destruction, and no other course is open to them but one, that which will eventually end in eternal fire'

'Election is a fact which must ever remain a mystery to us on earth, and perhaps for ever'

*George Prasher Jnr.:*

'There are, of course, fathomless depths about God's election of some to eternal life, yet the universal proclamation of the gospel to everyone who believes in the Saviour. These two things appear irreconcilable to human analysis. Yet both are plainly stated in our New Testament and acceptance of God's revelation in both respects is called for ... Nor must we harbour the thought that God would arbitrarily condemn to eternal doom any of His creatures because they are not among the elect. All who ultimately experience 'the second death' in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15) will have only themselves to blame for rejection of spiritual light made available to them. God's offer of eternal life to all who believe is genuine (John 3:16) , and His warnings of eternal judgement unmistakable (Mat. 25:46; John 5:29). Those hearing the gospel are responsible to decide for life or for death (2 Cor. 5:15-16)'

(Article on Election, *Needed Truth*, 1979, pp. 149, 150).

*W.E. Vine:*

'The salvation of every believer is known and determined in the mind of God before its actual accomplishment in a historical setting'

'God's foreknowledge involves His electing grace, but does not preclude human will. He foreknows the exercise of faith which brings salvation'

'The foreknowledge of God is the basis of His foreordaining counsels'

*John C. Lennox:*

‘Scripture teaches both God’s sovereignty and human responsibility, in which case all interpretations that press one side to the exclusion of the other must be incorrect, for the simple reason that Scripture itself does not allow one side to override the other’

‘Our very finiteness imposes a limitation that will mean that, in the end, even with our best attempts to understand Scripture, there will remain deep mysteries’

### **Conclusion**

From our examination of biblical statements, what we can say is that divine sovereignty and human responsibility are incontrovertible scriptural truths, which stand on their own merit, in defiance of human logic and rationale, and are presented to us as facts of faith. They cause us to confess and acknowledge that our thoughts and reasonings can be extremely remote at times from God’s thinking and working (Is. 55:8-9). When considering the election of grace for Israel’s remnant and the election of Gentiles, likened to the wild olive grafted into the root and fatness of a fruitful olive tree, the apostle can only stand back in wonder at the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, lost in the fact that His works are only understood in their entirety by Him, and His ways are beyond human comprehension and explanation (Rom. 11:5, 7, 17, 33-36).

*R.B. Fullarton, Bathgate*

### **Further Reading:**

#### **Bible Studies Volumes:**

‘Limited Atonement’ - Volume 71, Year 2004, pp. 28-30

‘Universalism, Arminianism, and Calvinism’ - Vol. 77, Year 2010, pp. 40-42

#### **Needed Truth Volumes:**

‘Election’ - Vol. 86, Year 1979, pp. 148-152

‘Predestined’ - Vol. 120, Year 2013, pp. 1-5

‘Called’ - Vol. 120, Year 2013, pp. 5-8

He who testifies to these things says,  
"Surely I am coming soon."  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20 ESV