

Revelation Chapter 19 - John Karmelich

1. This lesson is called "Understanding the "why" of Jesus Second Coming".
 - a) Let me summarize this chapter in a few sentences:
 - i) Everyone in heaven is shouting Hallelujah because Jesus is about return to earth.
 - ii) Then we have a few verses discussing the "bride" of Christ, which is the church.
 - iii) Jesus returns to earth on a white horse. Multitudes follow along.
 - iv) Jesus wipes out an army that wants to prevent Jesus from ruling on earth.
 - v) That's pretty much it. We all live happily ever after. Any questions? ☺
 - b) What I want to do in this lesson is understand why this is important. In other words, how does the inevitable return of Jesus affect our lives today? To put it another way, "I have enough problems in my life. Why should I think about Jesus Second Coming?"
2. To understand this, one must accept Jesus Second Coming as a fact.
 - a) Yes, the book is full of word-pictures as we've studied for lesson after lesson, but the key point is to accept the fact of Jesus literal return to earth one day. (Ref.: Acts 1:10-11).
 - b) The Book of Revelation predominately focuses on the events leading up to Jesus return.
 - i) In Chapter 19, we get to the actual event itself.
3. Let me explain how we are to "handle" waiting for the inevitable return of Jesus to rule on earth:
 - a) In the movie, "Fiddler on the Roof", there is a scene near the end of the movie after all the Jewish residents were kicked out of their hometown. One young man asked the local rabbi as they were leaving, "Wouldn't this be a good time for the Messiah to come? The rabbi wisely answered, "Perhaps we should wait for the Messiah somewhere else".
 - b) I consider that scene biblical, as well as good advice for the Christian. Jesus will return on His timing, not ours. Jesus said nobody knows the day or hour of His return. (Ref: Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:32). At the same time, we must as accept as fact that Jesus Second Coming is a literal event. It is considered one of the fundamental doctrines of Christian faith.
4. So why is it so important to accept this Second Coming? How does it affect our life?
 - a) The clues are in this chapter. The chapter opens with "everybody" in heaven praising God for judging the earth. Jesus then comes to earth to judge those who won't accept Him.
 - b) OK, the wicked are judged. What's your point? ☺ Personally, I can't explain all the evil in the world. Evil people appear to be getting away with stuff. Children die of cancer. Innocent people are killed due to the sins of others. I take comfort in the fact that there is an afterlife where all the "wrongs" will be made right. The only way life can be fair is if there is an afterlife and a God that judges people for their action. It isn't just a matter of punishing the guilty who happen to be around when Jesus comes back. It is a matter of setting the world straight from all the injustice in the world.
 - c) Let me put it this way: Chapter 20 introduces the concept of a millennial age. This is a 1,000-year period where Jesus rules as dictator. Those who survive the Great Tribulation may not like the idea of living by Jesus' rules. Christians come along with Jesus to rule with Him. (See 2nd Timothy 2:12) In other words, we're the enforcers. ☺ The 1,000-year millennium is God saying, "OK folks, I've let you humans run the world "your way" for thousands of years. Let's try it My way for one thousand years and see which is better!"
5. Let's review Revelation so far from the perspective of "Why does Jesus wait until Chapter 19 to actually come back to the earth?"
 - a) When my daughter was about four, I remember asking her to clean up the playroom. She said, "Oh, are we having company?" ☺ She was accustomed to the idea we clean up before company comes over. That's the way people are. When guests are coming over, it gives us a reason to clean up the place.

- b) When John the Baptist was preaching that the Messiah was coming, one of the lines he was using was "Make His Path's Straight". (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3 and Luke 3:4; a quote of Isaiah 40:3). The idea is when a king is coming to town, the road gets fixed. That is what is literally meant by "make his path straight". The idea behind the quote is to clean up one's life in terms of confession of sin.
 - c) The reason Jesus waits until Chapter 19 is that the earth has to be "prepared" for Jesus coming, the same way a place is "cleaned up" prior to the arrival of a king.
6. With that said, I'd like to review all of Revelation in perspective of this chapter:
- a) Chapter 1 was an overview of the whole book. It gives an overview and outline of the book. In Chapter 1, John the writer of Revelation is told to write about things that are happening and will take place (Verse 19). It gives descriptions (word-pictures) of Jesus that are used throughout the rest of the book.
 - b) Chapters 2-3 focus on the Christian church. 1st Peter 4:17 states that "judgment begins at the house of God". The idea is those who are most accountable are judged first. The good news for the "saved" is that the issue is not salvation, but one's behavior as a Christian. God focuses on the church first, as they are the ones who are the most accountable. Those chapters teach us how to live as Christians prior to Jesus Second Coming.
 - c) In Chapter 4, we had the unveiling of a scroll. There were seven seals on that scroll. With the removal of each seal, came some sort of judgment. In a sense, that seven-scrolled seal wasn't completely opened until Chapter 19. The seventh and final seal broke into seven "subparts" called "trumpet judgments". That was Revelation 8-9. The seventh trumpet broke into "seven more subparts" called "bowl judgments". That was Revelation 15-16. My point here is that final (of seven) seals from Chapter 4, which somehow involves Jesus Second Coming, isn't finished until all the judgments of Revelation are completed.
 - i) OK, John, you lost me. What's going on? ☺ The point is Chapter 4 through the first part of Chapter 19 describe judgments on earth that happen prior to Jesus Second Coming. These judgments are only "partial" punishments (as opposed to a complete destruction) in order to get the world's attention for Jesus' return.
 - ii) Chapters 4 through 18 are essentially one big set of judgments on the world that occur prior to the event of Jesus Second Coming.
7. Let's recall why these judgments are necessary prior to Jesus Second Coming:
- a) A big reason for all of this is God the Father's way of saying, "Ok folks, it's wrap up time. It's time for Jesus to come back and make an end to the damage caused by sin".
 - b) Let's face it, God could have just "zapped" all of the evil people instantly and set up shop with Jesus in charge. ☺ Instead, we had many chapters describing specific judgments. Part of the reason for this is a "last call". The judgments were done slowly as to see if anyone would repent and turn to God before the event of Jesus Second Coming itself.
 - c) Another reason for this drawn-out affair is to show that some people would never turn to God no matter what happens. It is God's way of showing us that some people will never change, even if there is overwhelming evidence of God's existence. Some people want to stick to their sinful lifestyle so bad, even blatant evidence of the return of Jesus is not enough to get people to change.
 - d) Finally, there is judgment itself. The judgment is to show us that God does care for us and God does harm those that harm Christians.
8. Which leads us to Chapter 19:
- a) The key event is Jesus Second Coming. The main thing Jesus does is "wipe out" an organized attempt to prevent Him from ruling on earth. In this lesson, we'll talk about why this event is organized. The important thing to remember is Jesus wins. This "is" the famous battle of Armageddon. In reality, it's not a battle. It's an instantaneous wipe out.
 - b) With that said, let's just start the text. We'll come back to "Understanding the "why" of Jesus Second Coming" through the lesson and at the conclusion.

9. Chapter 19, Verse 1: After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,² for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."
- a) The chapter opens with "after this". It is good to ask, "After what"?
 - i) This would be the events of the previous chapter.
 - ii) If you recall, the last two chapters focused on the destruction of Babylon.
 - iii) Chapter 17, Verse 16 described Babylon as being burned with fire.
 - iv) Chapter 18 was mainly a set of predictions about Babylon's fall from power.
 - v) The actual destruction of Babylon's leaders and army happens in this chapter.
 - b) Before we get to Babylon's destruction, Chapter 19 opens with a "Praise God" section.
 - i) Whatever is happening in Verse 1 and 2, it involves a lot of people and/or angels praising God. The first sentence of Verse 1 uses the term "a great multitude".
 - c) Remember John's location as he wrote this: "From somewhere in the wilderness".
 - i) The apostle John wrote Revelation. He was our eyewitness to these events.
 - ii) For Chapters 1 through 3, John was standing at his "home location" which at that time was an island called Patmos. (Ref. Rev. 1:9).
 - iii) From Chapters 4 through 16, John was in heaven describing things in both heaven and earth. I don't know if John saw could see earth from heaven or maybe he watched it on a monitor. ☺ Somehow, someway, John was shown the vision of all the judgment from heaven's perspective. (Ref. Rev. 4:1). This also tells me it is possible to see earth from heaven. We all wonder if our saved-in-heaven loved ones can see us. I don't know if they are, but this text tells me they can!
 - iv) In Chapter 17 Verse 1, John was "transported" to the wilderness. This, assumedly, is somewhere on earth. John is still at this location in Chapter 19.
 - v) My point of this "where was John" exercise is to understand that John was on earth when he heard this "loud roar" from heaven of people praising God.
 - d) The key word in this section of Revelation is "Hallelujah".
 - i) It is used four times Revelation 19. It is not used anywhere else in Revelation.
 - ii) In fact, it is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. I'll come back to that.
 - iii) This is a compound word that means "Praise God". The English spelling varies from translation to translation. The grammar of the word is designed to be one of encouragement. The idea is "come on and join me to praise God!"
 - e) In Verse 2, we read why this great multitude is praising God:
 - i) Because God has judged "the great prostitute". In Revelation 17:18, we learn that the prostitute is a nickname for the city of Babylon. Whatever this city is, was or will be, there is a great praise in heaven for its final destruction.
 - f) Every now and then I mention that a nickname for the entire bible is "A tale of two cities". Those two cities are Jerusalem and Babylon. That is relevant to this chapter.
 - i) Jerusalem is symbolic as "God's headquarters" on earth. This is the city where God's temple stood for centuries. This is the city where Jesus will rule the earth at His second coming. An angel told Mary that Jesus would rule one day from King David's throne (Ref: Luke 1:32). That would be in Jerusalem.
 - ii) Babylon is a symbol of everything opposed to the God of the Bible. Although the bible is full of predictions of its fall, there is relatively little text describing what goes on there. The impression I get is that just as Jerusalem represents God's headquarters, Babylon represents the headquarters of all opposition to God.
 - iii) Over the past two chapters, we dealt with spiritual opposition to God and the temptation of power and wealth. Babylon represents Satan's substitutional system to draw people away from God.

- iv) Do I believe Babylon is a literal city? Of course. It was at one time and I believe the Great Tribulation is a literal event. This world-empire, which is demonic lead and demonically influenced has to have a headquarters "somewhere", and that headquarters will be Babylon, wherever that is.
- v) In the end, "Jerusalem" and all it represents will win. We will read in Chapter 21 of a "New Jerusalem" coming from heaven to earth. Before we get to that, we need to read of the final destruction of Babylon, which is here in Chapter 19.
- g) Now we can get back to why this multitude is praising God:
 - i) God has condemned the "great prostitute". In other words, the demonic influence that gets people to turn from God is going to be destroyed. At this moment, I believe the event itself is still future, but it about to happen. There is a multitude of people praising God for what is about to happen.
 - ii) The second, and related aspect, is this multitude is praising God because of all the Christian martyrs who were killed by Babylon are now being avenged.
- h) Let me point out another key word in Verse 1: It is the word "roar".
 - i) Whatever John heard, it was loud. Whoever was praising God in heaven, you get the impression it was a large group and they were loud. I'm guessing Pentecostal churches like this verse. ☺ My application here is that if we are going to praise God, here's an argument for doing it enthusiastically. It's not a matter of standing out from the crowd. It's a matter of putting one's heart into it. The sound of a congregation praising God should "naturally" come out loud.
- i) Finally, let's personalize these verses.
 - i) Until I studied this passage, I have to admit it never occurred to me to praise God for the future destruction of whatever "Babylon" is. This actually gets back to the title for this lesson, "Understanding the "why" of Jesus Second Coming".
 - ii) The idea is to praise God for the destruction and judgment of the demonic and evil influences of the world. We need to praise God for this as if it is a done deal.
 - iii) When the world around us is falling apart, it is important to understand that one day Jesus will come back and right the wrongs. We live for that hope. This is why Jesus Second Coming is such an essential part of Christian's faith. It is the idea that there is a hope for this world. There is coming a day when the world will exist without demonic influence.
 - iv) In the meantime, let's get back to the "Hallelujah Choir" in Verse 3! ☺
- 10. Verse 3: And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."
 - a) Revelation does not give a lot of details on how Babylon is specifically judged. Again, Revelation 17:18 said Babylon is burned with fire.
 - b) When we think of a fire, it goes out when the fire's source is burnt up. What is unusual about this fire is "the smoke from her (Babylon) goes up for ever and ever".
 - i) My personal view is during the entire time Jesus rules on earth, there is going to be a pile of smoke from where this fire took place. I picture some place on earth with black smoke. It is surrounded by "yellow-caution" tape and fencing. ☺
 - c) Again, the "how" and the "where" question are not as important as the "why" question:
 - i) Why does this smoke go up forever? What's the application of this verse?
 - a) Most of us know the expression, "out of sight, out of mind". It means that once somebody or something is not in visual sight, we don't think about it. Here God is setting up this "eternal smoke signal" to remind people of what Babylon was and its influence over mankind.
 - ii) Remember that when we are tempted to turn from God, we are to see such temptation as God sees it: A future pile of smoke. As I stated in the last lesson, the danger of "anything" is if it gets us to compromise our faith in God.

- iii) As I've stated before, we need to understand that Satan's desire is to make Christians ineffective witnesses for God. We are to avoid the temptations that compromise our faith. We also need to praise God (and thus remind ourselves) that one day all those temptations will be burnt up.
- 11. Verse 4: The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!"
 - a) We're being reintroduced to some characters described in Chapters 4-7 of Revelation. That is, "twenty-four elders and the four living creatures". They give a final encore appearance here in Chapter 19. ☺
 - b) To recall from the early lessons on Revelation, the "twenty four elders" are probably the church or the leadership of the Christian church. Others argue it represents all believers in heaven. Others argue it is some sort of angelic beings. My personal view is that it represents believers because they "cast their crowns" before God. The idea of crowns is that they were rewarded for their faith in God. As to the "four living creatures", these were some sort of high ranking angelic beings guarding the throne.
 - i) The point is, whoever they are, they join in the praises of God.
 - c) As I stated in earlier lessons, whenever someone starts praising God in heaven, it becomes contagious! Others always join in. I always like to say to Christians in church, "You better get used to praising God. We're going to be doing a lot of this for eternity!"
 - d) The point of this verse is that everyone in heaven is "chiming in" to praise God for the destruction and judgment of Babylon.
- 12. Verse 5: Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"
 - a) My personal view is that "this voice" is the Holy Spirit. (Again, it is just my guess.) Even though the Holy Spirit is God and part of the Trinity, part of His function is get people to draw closer to God. A method of drawing us closer is to get us to praise God.
 - b) The point of this verse is not "everyone" at this point is praising God. Remember the word "Hallelujah" is an encouragement to join in the praise of God.
 - c) Suppose you say, "OK, God judges Babylon. I get that. Thank You God for doing that. ☺ Why make such a big deal out of this? Why can't I just give God a sincere thank you and then get back to my life? Why is this such a big deal?"
 - i) Well for starters, imagine going through all of this as a Christian. Imagine having to be killed solely for your faith in Jesus. To love God is also to love those who are fellow believers. To love God is to share in other Christian's grief. To love God is to comfort others in times of suffering. To love God is to remind others that Jesus will come back and make things right.
 - ii) Let me put it this way: In times when life is falling apart, a source of comfort is to praise God. Praise Him that He will fix the wrongs of the world. Praise God that we will live forever and this suffering is temporary. Praise God that all the demonic influences of the world will be destroyed one day. Praise God that He has the ultimate victory. There, I feel better already! ☺
- 13. Verse 6: Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.
 - a) In Verse 6 we have a "multitude". This multitude is praising God and giving God glory. They are also saying a wedding is about to happen and the "Lamb's bride is ready."
 - b) Let's see this from John the writer of Revelation's perspective:
 - i) Wherever John was, he is in the "wilderness" seeing this vision.
 - ii) John could comprehend what they were saying. (My view is whatever language is spoken in heaven, we can all understand it and speak it.)

- iii) John recognized what the "24 elders and four living creatures" looked like.
 - iv) The point is we may not understand all the "who" details, but John did.
 - v) The other point is to focus on what the text does say as opposed to worrying about "who is who" in this group.
- c) It's time to talk a little about a Jewish wedding ritual. It is relevant to this text.
- i) Historically, a Jewish marriage was arranged by parents. Speaking as a father of two girls, I'm all in favor of bringing back this tradition. ☺ This arrangement may happen years prior to the actual wedding.
 - ii) The actual wedding event was like a surprise party. The bride has a "general idea" when the wedding was about to take place, but not the exact date and time. The wedding party, including the groom would show up at the bride's house like a surprise party. The wedding feast would often go on for a few days.
 - iii) In many ways, the traditional Jewish wedding is symbolic of Jesus Second Coming. Since God knows all things, He knows who will be saved. In that sense, it is an "arranged marriage". We as Christians are "engaged" to Jesus.
 - iv) The actual marriage ceremony can be compared to Jesus Second Coming. We know it will happen one day, but not when. It will be a surprise as to the actual day, but not a surprise as we know the event will happen. Paul refers to the relationship between Jesus and the Christian church as a "husband and bride" (Ref.: Eph. 5:32).
 - v) Getting back to the text, it says, "The bride has made herself ready". The point is like a Jewish wedding, it is time for the ceremony to begin.
- d) Let me explain a common theory as to "who" is getting married to Jesus:
- i) In John 3:29, John the Baptist described himself as a "friend of the bridegroom". The idea is John is not the one getting married, but a friend of the bridegroom.
 - ii) There is a concept that the Christian church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts Chapter 2) and whose complete number comes at the rapture. The Christian church is a "special subset" of all saved souls in heaven. In other words, John the Baptist is associated with Old Testament prophets and not the church itself. Don't forget that Revelation is written to the church, as implied in Revelation 1:4.
 - iii) In other words, it is the "church" is the one getting married to Jesus. This chapter implies there are "guests" at the wedding. Those "guests" are not getting married, but are present. Some say the guests are angels. Others say it is people who are saved, but not necessarily part of this special "Christian" subset of saved people.
 - iv) Again, this is just one view. Some believe all saved souls in heaven are part of the "Bride of Christ". Based on John the Baptists' statement of "friend of the bridegroom", many, including myself accept this theory of Jesus marriage is only to the "church" and there are other saved people in heaven.
- e) Let's look at this verse another way:
- i) Our relationship to God is compared to a husband and wife relationship in Ephesians 5:32. Christians are encouraged to talk to God as if He is a close and personal friend, and at the same time remember that God is still God. We are to respect God's authority, but know we are personally welcome in His throne room.
 - ii) We as Christians are separated from God by sin. (See Isaiah 59:2). God has forgiven all of our sins as Jesus paid the price for them. God the Father did this out of His love for us. God wants to spend eternity with us to show us His love for us through Jesus (See: Ephesians 2:7).
 - iii) In many ways, that is the purpose of all of history. God uses the wedding illustration for us to comprehend how we as believers spend eternity in a close personal relationship with Him. Our relationship "starts off" like an engagement. In heaven, it is a sinless, perfect love relationship.

- iv) Which surprisingly, leads us back to this verse: It is about heaven praising the fact that the marriage relationship between Jesus and His followers is about to commence. The "wedding banquet" is about to happen.
 - v) The next event in Revelation is Jesus coming back to make an end of Babylon. The reason the Christian church gets married to Jesus as we come back with Him. We'll tackle that more in later verses.
14. Verse 8: Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)
- a) Understand that the sentence in parenthesis is part of the original text. The NIV translation decided to put this second sentence in parenthesis.
 - b) The previous section of Revelation 19 deals with "everyone in heaven" praising God for the judgment that is about to happen to Babylon. Verses 7-9 changed topics to discuss the "Marriage of the Lamb". Verse 7 said in effect, "The bride is ready" and Verse 8 keys on the fact the bride is wearing bright and clean linens. What does this mean?
 - c) We're leading up to Verse 11. In that verse, Jesus comes back to earth. Since we are finished with judgment, both good and bad, Jesus wants to come back to earth "as a married man". The bride is collectively, the church.
 - d) It is important to understand this is not a wedding ceremony with Jesus on the groom side and billions of people on the bride's side. ☺ In heaven, I'm convinced people can exist in more than three dimensions. Jesus entered a locked room after He was resurrected. (John 20:19) That same resurrected Jesus also had a physical body (John 20:26). Somehow, in heaven, each person is distinct, but "occupying space" does not appear to be an issue.
 - e) What the text does not say anything about is the wedding ceremony itself, other than the banquet. All that is stated in effect is "the bride is ready" and she's wearing nice linens.
 - i) As to the linen's, this is the uniform of the priests in the temple. After the priests washed, they put on fine linens. In desert climate, such clothe helps to prevent sweat. Such lines represent purity. That is the word-picture being presented here. The idea is Christians are "cleansed" from the blood of Jesus and are now pure.
 - f) The text itself says, "Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints".
 - i) I'm not sure what that means, but it sounds like a good thing. ☺
 - ii) I suspect it means we trusted in Jesus for our salvation to the death, and we are rewarded by being with Jesus forever.
 - iii) So, if the linens represent "the righteous acts of the saints", are they literal linens? Does that mean there a literal wedding? Yes. Remember Revelation is a mixture of a literal event and word-pictures. To commence Jesus reign on earth, there is a literal wedding ceremony of Jesus and the church.
15. Verse 9: Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' " And he added, "These are the true words of God."
- a) I want to comment on something I wrote on back in Chapter 1. Revelation 1:3 stated in effect that "Blessed are those that read this book. " Personally, I don't think we are blessed by reading about bowl judgments. ☺ The blessing includes understanding that Jesus will return and Jesus will "right the wrongs" of the world. The blessing is understanding the privilege of being part of the "Bride of Christ". The blessing is understanding that Satan is granted lots of power, but God and us make a majority that is stronger than anything and everything Satan and His demonic forces can throw at us! The blessing is understanding that the world will be judged and we don't have to be a part of that judgment.
 - b) Let me go back to a point I alluded to earlier. I believe Ephesians 2:7 is the "purpose of all history". It reads: "In order that in the coming ages he (God the Father) might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. " (NIV)

- i) Let me put it this way: God waited thousands of years to send Jesus. He gave all sorts of clues about Jesus' First Coming through prophetic writings. Those writings validated the events of Jesus' first coming. God went to a lot of time and trouble to arrange for His son to die on the cross at the exact moment He did.
 - ii) God is a god-of-love. If one has "perfect" love, one desires to express that love upon someone or something. For example if one has the gift of painting and loves to paint, one would paint even if they couldn't get paid for it. God created man so for "the ages to come" He can express His love upon us.
 - iii) At the same time, God cannot tolerate imperfection from His standards for right and wrong. A perfect God needs a perfect (or perfectly forgiven) person(s) to express that love upon. God wouldn't be perfect if He just "forgave" sin without punishing us for what we have done wrong. God Himself paying the price for sins is the only solution to this dilemma.
 - iv) Thus, from the time the church was born, to whatever day the last Christian gets saved, makes up a special group of people collectively called Christians.
 - v) The model of God's love is compared to the "ideal" marriage relationship. We all know every human marriage struggles due to our sinful nature. A marriage without the influence of sin would be a perfectly loving relationship that would last for all of eternity. That is what is going on here in Revelation! A perfect marriage between "perfected" bride(s) of Christ and the 100% God, 100% man who was sinless, is sinless, and always will be sinless.
 - vi) Verse 9 says "Blessed is those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" The blessing is not only the wedding banquet itself, but of understanding the privilege we have of Christians of spending eternity in a loving relationship.
16. Verse 10: At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
- a) Let me restate the first sentence with nouns instead of pronouns:
 - i) At this I (John) fell at his (the angel's) feet to worship him (the angel).
 - b) John was overwhelmed by what he saw. John started to worship the angel giving John this message. The angel said in effect, "Don't do that, worship God instead".
 - i) Give John a little credit for recording his own mistake in the text!
 - c) Let's think about this verse from John's perspective:
 - i) For 19 chapters now, John has seen many weird and incredible things. There is little commentary to this point how shocked John was by this. I get the impression John was busy writing down what he saw and he figured he could analyze it later.
 - ii) Yet this vision here in Chapter 19 made John "lose it". ☺ My personal view is that John didn't worship the angel as God, but was so grateful for the angel showing John the vision, he was thanking the angel profusely and it came out like worship.
 - d) Of all the things John has seen so far, why did this one cause John to stop and worship the angel? Remember what this last vision is: It is about the "bride of Christ". It is about the preparation of the Christian church as the "bride" of Jesus.
 - i) John was a member of that club. John himself was a Christian.
 - ii) This is the first time John got to see his own reward in heaven.
 - iii) The vision of his reward made John "grovel" in front of this angel.
 - iv) While it is wrong to worship the angel, this verse does give us a preview that all of "this" is worth it. It is worth the self-sacrifice, the denial, the lifestyle of living for Jesus Christ. There is a reward at the end of the day and it last for eternity. John got to see in person what is the hope of all Christian believers: Not only an eternity in heaven, not only an eternity with God, but an eternal love relationship with the Son of God, who gave up His life so we can spend eternity with Him!

- e) Let me paraphrase this verse from the angel's perspective. The angel said in effect, "Get up off the ground John! You're embarrassing me and you are embarrassing yourself! You are to worship God and that's it. You were granted the privilege of seeing the future and to write about it. If you really want to show some gratitude, write down what you saw and share it with the world!"
 - i) The last sentence of the verse says, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." That does not mean that every prophecy in the bible is specifically about Jesus, although a vast majority of them are. It means the "big picture" of bible prophecy is that it is all about God's redemptive plan for mankind and Jesus is the central figure of that plan.
 - ii) My view is the angel said, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" is because the angel wanted John to testify of Jesus. (That is, write Revelation.)
 - iii) Remember that angels appear to have free will. Satan and his demonic forces choose to rebel against God. (See Ezekiel 28:13-15, Rev. 12:4).
 - a) Many speculate that the reason the angel didn't want praise is that angel understood that the desire of praise is what caused Satan and his followers to rebel in the first place.
 - b) I once heard, "Compliments are like perfume, they are to be taken lightly". One has to be careful of the danger of our ego. The focus of our praise should be on God and not on us.
 - f) Now that John got straightened out, we can move on to the next topic.
17. Verse 11: I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.
- a) Now we come to the main event of Revelation: Jesus Second Coming.
 - i) We're done with all the "seal" judgments, "bowl" judgments, etc.
 - ii) We've done with the "Praise God, Jesus is about to come" section of this chapter.
 - iii) We're finished describing the wedding of Jesus and the bride. (We'll talk more in a few verses why this precedes Jesus Second Coming.)
 - iv) Those are all the "warm up acts". ☺ Now comes the main event.
 - b) OK, how do we know this horse rider in Verse 11 is Jesus? That word Jesus is not used!
 - i) For starters, in Verse 13, it says, "His name is the Word of God". John himself refers to Jesus by that title in the Gospel of John, Chapter 1. His robe has the words, "King of kings and Lord of Lords". Sounds like Jesus to me! ☺
 - ii) Understand that from Verses 11-16 we are going to get various descriptions of what Jesus looks like when He returns. Some are literal and some are figurative. Again, remember that Revelation is a mixture of word-pictures and literal events. If you take Revelation as all literal, a lot of it won't make sense. If you take it as all figurative, then it can be interpreted any way one wants. Bible prophecy is commonly a mixture of literal and figurative speech.
 - c) The text says, "A (horse) rider came out of heaven and his name is "faithful and true".
 - i) At the time John wrote this, it was customary for kings to be presented on a white horse. John would recognize this vision as a (the) king was coming.
 - ii) This made me wonder, "Are there horses in heaven?" Children always wonder if there are animals in heaven. It appears horses are up there. It made me wonder who has the eternal job of cleaning the stables. (Sorry. ☺)
 - d) The first title given of Jesus is "faithful and true".
 - i) This title was also used of Jesus in Chapter 3, Verse 14.
 - ii) Jesus is faithful in that He kept the promises of His Second Coming.
 - iii) Jesus is "true" as opposed to the "imposter" antichrist who was the world leader.
 - a) To use a popular cliché, "Jesus is the real deal".

18. Verse 11 (cont.): With justice he judges and makes war.
- a) Remember that Verses 11-16 contain descriptions and titles of Jesus. I'm going to describe each one at a time and then tie them all together.
 - b) The next one says, "He (Jesus) judges and makes war. There are variations of a bumper sticker that says in effect, "Jesus is coming back and this time He's angry". When one thinks of the "Sunday School Jesus", one thinks of a suntanned young man going around doing miracles and patting kids on the head. ☺ We don't think of Jesus as a warrior.
 - i) Jesus Second Coming is about judgment and ruling over people. It is about avenging those who have done harm to Jesus' own people.
 - ii) There are Christians who believe war is always wrong. That doesn't appear to be Jesus' attitude in Revelation! The bible teaches there are times when war is necessary. (See Ecclesiastes 3:8) This is one of those times. I always think of war as a last resort. This Great Tribulation period lasts a long time. God is giving people every chance possible to repent before Jesus the "warrior" is necessary.
19. Verse 12: His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.
- a) The idea of "blazing fire" refers to judgment. This description of Jesus was used twice before in Revelation (1:14 and 2:8). The idea is that fire is used to get the impurities out of metal. It is not literal, but a word picture of judgment.
 - b) On Jesus' head were "many crowns". In Verse 16 coming up, it says, "Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords". Both of these titles refer to the fact that Jesus is not just king over the Christians, but king over the world. He is greater than any emperor. One crown might be symbolic of the fact Jesus is ruler over Christians. Multiple crowns refer to the fact Jesus is ruler over all people.
 - c) The last line is "(Jesus) has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself."
 - i) There is lots of speculation as to what this means. Since the text says in effect, "No one but God knows what this means", there is no need to comment much further.
 - ii) The important idea is that there are aspects about God that are beyond our knowledge. (Also see Isaiah 55:8 on this topic.)
20. Verse 13: He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.
- a) The next bit of information we get is that his robe is dipped in blood. (Some scholars say "sprinkled" for all you Greek language trivia buffs. ☺) The question is, "What's the significance of the blood"? Again, we can only speculate as the text doesn't say.
 - b) I don't believe it refers to the blood of Jesus' enemies as the battle hasn't happened as of yet. My view is that it is symbolic of Jesus' own blood. The point is Jesus is given the authority to complete this judgment as He agreed to have his own blood shed for us.
 - c) Next, the text says, "His name is the Word of God". Yes, this is a title of Jesus. It ties to Jesus statement of "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures (i.e., the Word of God) that testify about me (Jesus)". (John 5:39 NIV, text in parenthesis added) In other words, Jesus is saying the whole of the bible (i.e., its main theme) focuses on the predictions, the life, death, resurrection and Second Coming of Jesus, both in literal descriptions and word pictures.
21. Verse 14: The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.
- a) We now get our focus off his Jesus and onto his posse. ☺ (That is a cowboy term that refers to those that follow the leader.) Apparently, when Jesus comes back, there is going to be a lot of people following Him.
 - b) Remember I mentioned about the fact there are horses in heaven? Apparently that stable is a lot bigger than I imagined. It says the "armies of heaven" came riding on horses!

- c) At the time of John's writing, most armies were on foot. There are strategic advantages to those that ride on horses. It is a way of showing the superiority of the "warriors" coming on horses. Some commentators argue for this "theory" as to why have all the horses.
 - d) OK, so who is this army? The clue is they were "dressed in fine linen, white and clean".
 - i) Back in Verse 8, the "bride of Christ" was given "fine linens" to wear. My theory (along with many) is that once the wedding ceremony is over, we don't get to honeymoon at a resort in Hawaii. ☺ We're off to accompany Jesus on war trip!
 - e) Notice in Verse 13 that Jesus robe was dipped in blood.
 - i) Here in Verse 14, those accompanying Jesus had clean and white linen. If these "assistants" to Jesus are going to war, you get the impression we're not going to get very dirty. We've got the "clean sheets".
 - ii) When we get to the Battle of Armageddon, coming up in a few verses, one gets the impression, Jesus does all the work. The "accompanying army" pretty much stands there and watches Jesus. We don't share in the glory of this victory. The point of all of this is God gets all the glory in the war.
 - iii) The purpose of the army (i.e., Christians) coming along is that we get to rule and reign with Jesus after this battle is over. (Ref: 2nd Timothy 2:12, Revelation 20:6).
22. Verse 15: Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.
- a) Verse 15 begins with, "Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword". Understand this is not a literal sword hanging out of Jesus' mouth where one by one he kills people. ☺
 - i) Again, Revelation is a mixture of a literal event and word pictures.
 - b) The idea is the Word of God predicts Jesus ultimate victory. One can count on these predictions as fact. The idea of Jesus conquering those who don't want to submit to Him is not a surprise to those who accept the bible as truth. The point is the Word of God is compared to a sword as it "cuts to the heart" in its truth. (Ref: Eph. 6:17, Hebrews 4:12). The bible truth is the same truth that will also defeat those who refuse to submit to God.
23. Verse 16: On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.
- a) Most bible translations put "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" in all upper case. The idea is to convey the fact this is a title of Jesus.
 - i) When Jesus comes back, this title will be displayed on his robe and thigh. Just like the reference to many crowns, the idea is that Jesus is ruler over all.
 - b) OK, let's step back and put this all together. If the text wanted to be more literal, it could just say, "Jesus comes back as king of all. He has His followers come back with Him. Jesus then wipes out the antichrist and all who follow Him in one swoop".
 - i) Instead of being that literal, the text is full of word pictures. Remember our minds remember word pictures better than literal facts. These word pictures also tie to other bible descriptions and predictions about Jesus. The idea is for the bible reader to "connect" those predictions and understand this is Jesus.
 - c) The point of this section is that Jesus is God. Jesus is literally going to come back one day and destroy this final rebellion against God and all who are a part of it. Jesus has the "right" to do this as He agreed to God the Father's will of paying the price for our sins. God's love for us is demonstrated in God destroying those who want to harm us.
24. Verse 17: And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."
- a) Now that we have established the event of Jesus' return, the next phase is the battle itself. Verses 17 to the end of the chapter get into a battle against the antichrist and his army.

- b) Let me set the scene: If you recall from the last few chapters, it was describing the future judgment of a city called "Babylon". Whether it refers to the ancient city of Babylon (now in Iraq) or another city has been debated for centuries. The point is there is a final organized rebellion against the God of the Bible. Babylon is the headquarters. This appears to be some sort of world-empire with Babylon as its capital. The theories vary widely as to the details, but this is the general idea. The leader is a human who is demonically influenced, who we call the antichrist. There is also a second leader who is the spiritual leader of this empire. We'll read in the next set of verses of a final battle between this empire's army and Jesus Himself. This is the "Battle of Armageddon".
 - c) Prior to this battle taking place, we have Verses 17-18. Here we have an angel "standing in the sun", telling a bunch of birds in effect, "Hey everyone, dinner's ready! There is going to be a great battle and you get to eat the carcasses. Dig in!" ☺
 - i) One has to remember in ancient warfare, the dead bodies were not removed, but were left for animals to eat up. Apparently that will be the case here.
 - ii) This text is not written for the bird's sake, but for our sake. It is for us to know that Satan will lose this battle despite His best effort to stop Jesus from returning.
 - d) Let me also comment on "the angel standing in the sun". That verse is written from the perspective of one standing on the earth. My guess is one looks up toward the sun, and the sun itself is blocked by the angel speaking.
 - i) You would think that angel standing there would be a motivation for Babylon's army soldiers to "think twice" about this battle. It is another indication that a person can get to a "point of no return" in their defiance of God.
25. Verse 19: Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.
- a) Of all the strange things in Revelation, the hardest part for me to accept is the fact that there is an organized rebellion against the God of the Universe! You would think that people would accept the fact they couldn't win before it started. It is hard for me as a follower of God to comprehend that there are people out there willing to "go to the death" rather than submit their lives to God.
 - b) Here in this verse, we see this organized effort of armies to battle against Jesus return.
 - c) What occurred to me as I was reading this is Satan knew the exact day of Jesus Return. Back in Revelation 13:5, it stated that the antichrist has exactly 42 months to rule (i.e., exactly three and on half years). You get the impression Satan kept a big "countdown calendar to Jesus return" on his wall. From whenever that day started when the antichrist ruled, I'm guessing he understood the time frame before Jesus will come back.
 - i) My point is I believe Satan is expecting the day of Jesus' return. Satan knows His time is up once Jesus returns. In an act of desperation, Satan organizes this final battle against God and against Jesus return. It is the last act of a desperate "being". That is the underlying motivation of Verse 19.
26. Verse 20: But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. ²¹ The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.
- a) This text is describing the famous "Battle of Armageddon".
 - i) If you read this text carefully, you will notice something is missing: A battle.
 - ii) There is no "battle". It is an instant wipeout. Somehow, the losing army dies as if Jesus just says "boo" and everyone falls down dead. We don't read of the armies of heaven taking any casualties. It is just the antichrist's army losing instantly.

- b) The word Armageddon is not mentioned in this chapter. We get that location from earlier in Revelation. (Ref.: Rev 16:16). It is a large valley in Israel. The prophet Zechariah predicts that when Jesus returns, it will be to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem:
 - i) "Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley...Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him." (Zechariah 14:3-5 NIV). One can see the parallels between the Revelation predictions and what Zechariah is predicting. It is describing the same battle.
 - c) Verse 20 says in effect that the two leaders of Babylon, the antichrist and the "worship leader" were both thrown into "the fiery lake of burning sulfur". I'm not sure where that lake is, but I'd rather avoid the place. Most commentators argue it is hell itself.
 - d) As to the armies who followed these two, we don't read of their souls, just their dead bodies. The last sentence describes the birds eating their carcasses.
 - e) Notice that not "everyone" who lived on earth dies in this battle. I suspect many people stayed home while the armies went out to fight. My point is I believe some people do live through this horrible period. Those survivors are the ones Jesus rules "over" with the "iron rod" reference of Verse 5 of this chapter.
27. On that happy note, Revelation 19 is over. ☺ Let's return to "Understanding the "why" of Jesus Second Coming":
- a) The Second Coming of Jesus is a happy event for those who are expecting it. Remember the first half of this chapter was people and angels singing "Hallelujah" over the fact of Jesus Second Coming. The church also gets married to Jesus. John the writer of Revelation is so ecstatic over the first half of the chapter he makes the mistake of starting to worship the angel that showed John this event.
 - b) The second half of this chapter (more or less) describes what the Second Coming means to those who don't want Jesus ruling over their hearts: They lose. I could get a lot more graphic about the birds eating the bodies, but "they lose" says it all.
 - c) A lot of preachers on this chapter like to ask in effect, "Folks, there are two banquets in this chapter. One is a wedding banquet and one is birds eating dead bodies. Which banquet do you want to be a part of?"
 - d) In a sense, we are all part of one or the other. The bible teaches we all live for eternity and it is a matter of choice where we want to spend that eternity. It is tragic to read that some people desire to choose hell, even to the point of desiring to battle Jesus at His return!
 - e) The "why" of Jesus Second Coming is to get the world back to the way God desires. From the point Adam and Eve sinned, God stood back and said in effect, "OK, you want to live without me for awhile? Take your best shot at it! The influence of sin has been the ruin of man for centuries. The rebellion against God had a beginning and will have an ending one day. Our hope is the fact that one day, God is "going to make it all right again", not only in heaven but on earth itself. That is what the "return of the Messiah" is all about.
 - f) In the meantime, we don't stand still, staring at the sky and watch for His Second Coming. ☺ To quote Fiddler on the Roof again, "Maybe we should wait for the Messiah somewhere else". God wants us busy being witnesses for Him until He returns. The time of the event may be a shock, but not the event itself. The fact that Jesus returns one day is also designed to be a motivational factor for us to live a life for Him in all that we do.
28. Father, Thank You for these lessons about Jesus Second Coming. Like those in Heaven, let us shout Hallelujah that this will happen one day! Help us to see this as a joyful event when the day comes of no more demonic influence and no more rebellion against Your authority. In the meantime, help us to be good witnesses to You. Help us in our moments of rebellion to remember what is the ultimate fate of those who rebel against You. Guide our lives in all that we do. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.