

• Last of the seven words of judgement

• John witnesses the joy of heaven's inhabitants over Babylon's destruction

• Babylon is defeated – God's people witness the reigning and ruling of Jesus Christ

1. Spiritual victory comes as God's people rejoice

• We should also rejoice

2. Spiritual victory comes as we prepare ourselves to meet Jesus the heavenly husband

• As the bride of Christ prepares for the coming of Jesus, Babylon is defeated

• The bride prepares herself by godly living – withstanding the pressures of 'Babylon'

3. The people of God are motivated by an invitation

• The unsaved are not invited

In Revelation 19:6–8 we have the last of the seven words of judgement against 'the woman sitting on seven hills'. She is replaced by the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ¹.

John is experiencing a vision. 'In the Holy Spirit' he is in heaven. He is witnessing the inhabitants of heaven rejoicing over what God is doing. 'Babylon' and 'the prostitute' – symbols of worldly, persecuting, idolatrous, money-making wickedness – have fallen. The people of God on earth and in heaven are all rejoicing.

⁶*And I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude; it was like the sound of many waters, and like the voice of mighty thunders. Voices were saying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, is reigning.'* It is not the end of the world, but Babylon has been defeated. God's people are witnessing the reigning and ruling of the Lord Jesus Christ over the affairs of the earth. The military hero, our Lord Jesus Christ, has gone out conquering and doing some more conquering.

1. **Spiritual victory comes as God's people rejoice.** The inhabitants of heaven say, ⁷*'Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Let us give the glory unto him.'* It is a hint to us that we should be rejoicing too. We are seated in the heavenly places. By faith we are in heaven already and are living the heavenly life. The joy of the Lord is our strength. The angels rejoice and we rejoice with them.

2. **Spiritual victory comes as we prepare ourselves to meet Jesus the heavenly husband.** The multitude cry out: *'For the marriage of the Lamb has arrived and his wife has prepared herself.'* There is a connection between what we have here and the defeat of Babylon. The people of God get themselves ready; and Babylon has been defeated. These two things are the same and they go on side-by-side – although John cannot have us reading two books side-by-side and has to present one scene after another! John can, however, put the two scenes into one section! As the bride of Christ, the church, prepares herself for the coming of Jesus, Babylon is defeated. They have had to avoid Babylon's sin¹. And (as the next section of the book of Revelation will make plain) they have continued to give their testimony to the word of God. As they do so, two things are happening at the same time: Babylon falls and the bride is preparing herself for Jesus.

The bride gets herself ready by godly living (if one may be allowed to mix together pictorial and literal language). ⁸*'And it was given to her that she should clothe herself in fine linen, bright and pure.'* For the fine linen is the righteous things done by the holy people of God. God's people get themselves ready for Jesus by withstanding the pressures of 'Babylon' and living for God in all that they do. We notice that they do this by the grace of God. 'It was **given** to her . . .'

3. **The people of God are motivated by an invitation.** The angel has something else to say. ⁹*And he said to me, 'Write down: Blessed are the people who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'* The Christian is invited to the occasion when he or she will be part of the people of God presented to Jesus. Unsaved people are not even invited! Saved people are invited but they have to get themselves

¹ 19:6-8

¹ 18:4-20

• *The saved have to be ready*

• *God's elect will all reach heaven, but some will miss sharing in the day of presentation*

• *The bride must be ready before Jesus comes*

• *John was so impressed with this angel that he honoured him by falling down before him*

• *God's ultimate kingdom is for saved men and women, not angels*

• *Testifying to Jesus is at the heart of prophecy*

ready. I believe that if some of the saved do not get ready, they will be excluded from the marriage-supper even though they are saved (which seems to be another way of saying what is in 1 Corinthians 3:15). No part of the bride of Christ will be presented to him if that part is unclean. We are brought into the very presence of God and presented to him. But (says Colossians 1:23) this is only true 'provided that you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel'. God's elect will, I believe, all reach heaven, but some of God's elect will miss sharing in the day of presentation. One star differs from another star in glory. Our 'presentation day' is our motivation. Before the saints of God can experience their final 'marriage' to Jesus they must complete the work of getting ready for Jesus to come. The bride has to be ready **before** Jesus comes. The ruination of Babylon is not the end of the world.

These words of the angel are very serious. John says: *And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.'* John was so impressed with this angel that he honoured him by falling down before him, as if the angel were divine. ¹⁰*And I fell down before his feet to give him great honour. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do anything like that! I am a fellow-servant of God with you, and with your brothers and sisters that hold firm to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.'* We human beings tend to think that we are very inferior to angels. If we saw one we would fall on our faces! And yet God's ultimate kingdom is not for angels; it is for saved men and women. We shall be greater than the angels. They do not like it if we honour them too much! The Holy Spirit wants us to glorify Jesus. 'The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy'. This seems to mean: 'Testifying to Jesus is what takes place when the Holy Spirit is at work inspiring God's people'. Or perhaps it means (if the 's' should be a small 's'): 'Testifying to Jesus is the heart-and-centre of prophecy'. Both interpretations amount to the same thing! The angel and John are fellow-servants because they both have the job of testifying to Jesus.



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