

Chapter Nineteen

The Lamb's Bride Is Ready Spiritual Warfare Human Institutions and Nations Judged

19:1-2 After these things I heard, as it were, a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her."

After these things: After the judgment of Jerusalem, the Jewish seat of power.

Loud voice: A message heard throughout creation. (See notes on 5:2) The first salutation goes to God, praising Him for judging the unrepentant Jews. They not only corrupted God's covenant, but also seduced those who came under their influence.

After committing adultery with Bathsheba, David was punished, beginning with the death of his child with Bathsheba. David's punishment had little to do with adultery and murder, and much to do with his actions causing the heathen nations to *blaspheme* God. (2 Sam 12:14) He had effectively negated any belief on the part of others that Israel worshiped the One True God. Paul told the Jews, "The name of God is blasphemed among the nations because of you." (Rom 2:24) Instead of being a light leading nations to God, Israel had become a stench in His nostrils. By their corrupt ways, they caused others to go astray.

19:3 And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever."

The second salutation praises the *permanence* of Jerusalem's destruction.

Smoke rises up forever: A metaphor implying total desolation with no chance of resurrection:

Its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its loose earth into brimstone, and its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall be desolate; none shall pass through it forever and ever. (Isa 34:9-10)

Many so-called scholars teach that Israel will one day be resurrected when Christ returns to the earth in His so-called thousand-year reign. Salvation is "to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile," (Rom 1:16; 2:10) referring to God's promise to Abraham. However, there is no "Jew nor Greek" in Christ. (Gal 3:28) Neither is there any distinction between the two. (Rom 10:12) To suppose that God will someday try and renew His relationship with physical Israel does not jibe with scripture. Those with a pure heart are whom God considers Jews, not those of a particular nation and blood lineage. (Rom 2:29)

19:4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”

The two previous “hallelujah’s” are confirmed by the Creation itself (living creatures) and the 24 elders (the spirit of the 12 Jewish tribes and 12 apostles—See notes on 4:4).

The two characteristics of evil—deceit and violence—have existed since Satan came into the world. He deceived and murdered the human race. The mystery of iniquity contained both, covering up the devil’s schemes and using others to carry them forth. Israel had become spiritually bankrupt and self-deceived. Violence against the apostles and saints was in the hands of the beast. The destruction of that empire would therefore relieve the earth of oppression. For the godly person, the destruction of this Christ-hating, soul-enslaving kingdom would result in joy and gladness. The Israel that God had intended no longer existed, but had transformed into a devouring beast. God would destroy that which had been corrupting His people, the kingdom that had been mimicking the True Church. The Jews had been in pretense of being God’s holy people, when in fact, it was a devouring beast. They had given their seat of power to Satan (Rev 2:13; 3:9), and unwittingly carrying out his designs (Rev 2:9).

19:5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.”

Voice from the throne: God’s voice. The throne is the seat of God’s authority and centerpiece as the King of the Universe. Notice the progression of this voice in Revelation:

I heard the *voice of many angels around the throne*, saying “Worthy is the Lamb.” (Rev 5:11)

The seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air; and a *loud voice came out of the temple from the throne*, saying, “It is done.” (Rev 16:17)

A voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” (Rev 19:5)

I heard a *loud voice from the throne*, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them. (Rev 21:3)

The progression of these voices gets closer and closer to the Father: messengers, temple, throne (voice), throne (loud voice) As the voice increases in authority, so do the messages which are coupled with it:

1. Worthy is the Lamb—messenger’s voice
2. It is done (The Gospel is complete)—declaration from the temple
3. Give praise (because of the work of redemption)—God’s voice
4. God now dwells among men—loud voice of final proclamation that God’s plan was complete.

19:6-7 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”

Voice of a great multitude/many waters: The collective voice of the many nations. Remember that the Great Harlot sat on many waters, which were defined as nations. (17:15) This is the fulfilled promise made to Abraham, as the father of many nations. (Rom 4:17-18)

Marriage of the Lamb: Now that Israel had been “divorced,” Jesus Christ could now “marry” His bride. Although God had “courted” Israel, she had rejected Him. The old relationship established under Moses was now dissolved. Those who want to seek God now must do so in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23)

Bride has made herself ready: John the Baptist said, “the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice.” (John 3:29) Judah and Jerusalem were to become desolation and waste, no longer hearing the voice of the bridegroom. (Jer 33:10-11) The sun is portrayed as a bridegroom coming out of his tent, casting light upon the earth. (Psa 18:1-5) In the previous chapter, the bride was determined to be the church. Yet the marriage of the Lamb to the church could not take place until the evil woman—the Jews who rejected Christ—were first removed.

Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Mosaic age, the church is represented as being merely espoused, but not married, to Christ. (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27) According to Jewish custom, there were three stages to completion of the marriage union: There was the *betrothal* or espousal, the *interval*, and the *consummation*. The betrothal answers roughly to our engagement. Upon betrothal, the man and woman are considered married in law, but not in fact. The period from the betrothal to the consummation of the marriage by the union of the man and the woman as one flesh is the interval, The interval is represented in scripture as the period between Christ’s ascension and his second coming at the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus, in the parable of the marriage of the king’s son (Matt. 22:1-14), when those bidden to the wedding made light of it and refused to come, the king “was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” (Matt. 22:7) The application of this parable to Jerusalem and the Jews is unmistakable. They were the ones bidden to the wedding but who made light of it and slew the servants of the great king. They were the ones whose city, Jerusalem, was burned. Indeed, the Pharisees themselves understood this parable to relate to them and, because of it, took counsel to destroy Jesus. (Matt. 22:15; cf. 21:45, 46) Just as in the parable, the king caused the city of those who refused to come to be burned, and then the marriage was prepared, so here the destruction of the great city precedes the marriage of the Lamb.¹

19:8 And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

The bride is clothed in *righteousness*. It is the righteousness of the *saints*. Thus, the bride symbolizes a spiritual *concept* of purity cloaked with the deeds of Christians. As the priests of the tabernacle wore fine linen to carry out their duties, so does the church—a kingdom and priesthood—living and serving in truth and righteousness.

Redemption presupposes a delivery from sin’s slavery, where men are removed from bondage and

¹ *The Consummation of the Ages*, pp. 350, 351

delivered out of Hell's reach. In this way, the church is made spotless and without wrinkle, presented to Christ as a bride made acceptable.

19:9 And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son. (Matt 22:2) Only those Christ knows are invited to this particular event. (Matt 25:10-13) The marriage supper signifies the salvation of the Jews and especially the Gentiles, as portrayed in these two parables.

19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The consummation of this Good News of salvation caused a great tumult of emotion within the apostle, causing him to prostrate himself at the angel's feet. The angel, being a spiritual being, is not superior to those earthly brethren, but calls himself "a fellow servant."

Testimony of Jesus: The one usage here explains that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (19:10) John wrote that he "bore witness to all that he saw, and to the testimony of Jesus." (1:2) He also stated that the reason he and others were being persecuted was because of this same testimony. (1:9) The offspring of the woman was attacked by the dragon for holding to Christ's testimony. (12:17) What is the "spirit of prophecy"? It is the Gospel, the testimony of Jesus, predicted by the Holy Scriptures.

19:11 And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

This event builds upon the scene shown in chapter six. It is not chronological. Its events do not follow the marriage, but precede it, and are connected with the battle of the great day of God. (Rev 16:14) Failure to see how Revelation repeats itself has been a cause of misleading interpretations.

Heaven opened: Literally, heaven is *revealed*. In 11:19, it is the "temple of God which is in heaven" that is opened. In 15:5, it is the "temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven" that is opened. Under the Mosaic system, the glory of God dwelt within the temple. (Exo 19:18; Isa 6:4) When the Word became flesh, it "dwelt among men" and they "beheld His glory." (John 1:14) Thus, God was revealed (opened) to the world through Christ. In the New Jerusalem, the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple which dwells with men. (21:22)

White horse: The righteous judgment of God's word. (See notes on 6:2) "In righteousness (white) He judges and wages war (horse)." God says, "Behold, I am making all things new. Write, for these words are *faithful and true*." (21:5-6) Jesus is "the faithful and true witness." (3:14)

Jewish kings used mules or donkeys in their processions, not horses. (1 Kgs 1:33, 38, 44) Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, where He told His disciples, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" (Matt 21:5) Horses were used only for war.

Christ's character has changed from "the faithful and True Witness," to that of Judge and Avenger.

He wears robes dipped in the blood of His adversaries.

19:12-13 **And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself. And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.**

Eyes are a flame of fire: A description of Jesus (1:14; 2:18) and how He *discerns* or *judges* the world. What He sees is tested by fire (judged). The word that He spoke will judge men in the last day. (John 12:48) Only those who have the pure gold of faith will pass through these fierce flames. In speaking of men's works of faith, Paul writes:

...his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and *the fire will test the quality of each man's work*. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (1 Cor 3:13-15) (NIV)

Upon His head are many diadems: Not seven, or ten, but *many*, signifying a complete rule over all other authorities, both in heaven and earth. Two Hebrew words translated *diadem* in the OT come from a word meaning *to wind around*. One of these words refers to the high priest's headpiece (Lev 8:9; 16:4), as well as the king's turban. (Ezek 21:26) The other word is also rendered *diadem* in several OT passages. (Isa 62:3; Job 29:14) The NT uses the Greek word for diadem only in the Book of Revelation. (Rev 12:3; 13:1; 19:12) The NT also makes a clear distinction between a diadem and a crown. A crown was a garland or a wreath awarded for faithfulness in service, such as a crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8), while a diadem always symbolized royal authority.

A name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself: A title of authority considered only by God and not man.

'Name' (*onoma*) is used for everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is aroused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering, the name, that is, for one's rank, authority, interests, pleasure, command, excellencies, deeds, etc. (Thayer)

When Samson's father, Manoa, asked the angel what his name was, the angel replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is *beyond understanding*." (Judges 13:18) In other words, man cannot know, or understand it. *No one* refers to *nobody*—men women, or angels. It's a neuter noun.

Written denotes that which is recorded so as not to be forgotten. Thus, this God-given authority and title is a permanent one, the depths of which no human being can truly perceive. However, it seems that those who know the Word of God can understand through the Holy Spirit:

...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Eph 3:14-19)

Thus, as Christ has a name no one understands, Christians possess the same character:

To him who overcomes, to him I will give...a white stone, and a new name written on the

stone *which no one knows* but he who receives it. (Rev 2:17)

Clothed with a robe dipped in blood: The word *baptize* means *to dip*. A Christian's righteousness is given by grace through faith in the blood of Christ. (Rom 3:24-26) The cover (robe) of the Ark of the Covenant was sprinkled with blood on the Day of Atonement. (Lev 16) Again, a characteristic also held by the followers of Christ:

These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:14)

His name is called The Word of God: This is the name which no one understands: the Word made flesh. (John 1:14) It is also a title given to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 28:25; 1 Cor 12:8; Eph 6:17) Jesus is the culmination of God's plan of reconciling the world to Himself. (2 Cor 5:18-19) In a spiritual sense, the word of God abides in all believers (Col 3:16; 1 Jo 2:14) and is thus multiplied throughout the earth. (Acts 12:24) It is the Living Force by which we are re-born. (1 Pet 1:23) It is also the Truth (John 17:17; 2 Tim 2:15; James 1:18), and ultimately, the Gospel. (Col 1:3)

This war described is fought with the Word of God. It is a battle of truth against lies, with the consequences of death (blood on His robe) to those who oppose the Word.

One wonders at the close comparison of Christ to His believers. Both have a name (title of authority) not discerned by the world, both have robes dipped in blood, and both have possession of the Word of God. As the love of God is made manifest in both the cross and the love within the church, so also may His judgment be similarly manifest. This similarity between Christ and His followers may be seen in this judgment. Christ has been given authority to judge the world. (John 5:27) Yet Paul implies that believers will also judge the world. (1 Cor 6:2)

19:14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

The deception of the Devil was no longer effective against the Gospel's truth. The angelic armies fought and overcame Satan, a re-telling of chapter 12, where Michael and his angels make war against Satan and his angels. These are heavenly armies dealing out judgment. But it does not say that the robes of the heavenly army are dipped in blood, only Christ's and the saints' robes are. They are a *righteous* army, as signified by their priestly garments of fine linen.

The church is in the world dealing out the Gospel (sword of Christ's mouth), and the angels attend them in a spiritual service. (Heb 1:14) Whatever is bound on earth, so shall it be bound in heaven. (Matt 16:19; 18:18-19)

19:15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Sharp word from His mouth: Although this is the Word of God, as defined in verse 13, it is another description of Christ. (1:16; 2:12, 16)

Listen to me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named me. And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has concealed me, and He has also made me a select

arrow; He has hidden me in His quiver. And He said to me, “You are My servant, Israel, in whom I will show My glory.” (Isa 49:1-3)

Israel was supposed to have been the carrier of God’s law and commandments, described in Isaiah 49 as “a select arrow.” But like a crooked arrow, it went astray from God’s intended plan.

He may smite the nations: It is the word of God that judges the nations. “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” (John 12:48) The smiting, or striking of the nations is done with God’s law and truth—His Word. In this sense, the Word punishes. The *ruling* is shown to be with a rod of iron, which means it is a strong and unbreakable rule. (See notes on 2:26-28)

He will rule them with a rod of iron: The tool used to destroy the nations (judges and kings) who don’t honor the Son. (Psa 2:7-12) This prophecy appears in 2:27, where Christians are promised that they would rule the nations with a rod of iron. It signifies the destruction of human authority. This spiritual iron tool was made for dealing with the unrighteous:

The worthless, every one of them will be thrust away like thorns, because they cannot be taken in hand; but *the man who touches them must be armed with iron* and the shaft of a spear, and they will be completely burned with fire in their place. (2 Sam 23:6-7)

He treads the wine press: A clarification of the smiting (striking) of nations. The works of men are destroyed in this wine press after being struck down. (See notes on 14:19) The wine press appears six times in Revelation. “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36) Obstinate disbelief in God’s existence will incur His wrath. (Rom 1:18ff) Christ’s blood saves us from it. (Rom 5:9) Lusts of the mind and flesh by the sons of disobedience are also reasons for God’s wrath. (Col 3:5-6)

In Christ, all branches of government come together in one: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. The scepter belongs to the legislative; it is a token of the power to make and decree laws. The sword belongs to the judicial; it is an emblem of justice and retribution. However, to make war and tread the wine press of the wrath of God belongs to the executive; *i.e.*, the King.²

19:16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Again, this is the name that “no one knows but Himself.” The robe is the symbol of righteousness. His title is a righteous one, as is His authority.

On His thigh: A symbol of an oath and promise. A person struck his own thigh as a sign of sorrow, an action similar to beating the breast. (Jer 31:19; Ezek 21:12) During the time of the patriarchs, it was a custom that when one made an oath, he put his hand under the thigh of the one requiring the oath. (Gen 24:2, 9; 47:29) To smite “hip and thigh” indicated a violent, widespread slaughter. (Judg 15:8)

19:17-18 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God; in order

² *The Consummation of the Ages*, p. 356

that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”

Angel standing in the sun: Standing is significant of being established or may represent an unfinished work. The context here suggests establishment. He is established in the sun, in the pure and shadow-less light of truth. His loud voice is a symbol of a voice heard throughout creation.

Birds which fly in midheaven: The spiritual devourers of those whom God has judged and have fallen in battle against Him. The birds of heaven ate the followers of Ahab who fell in the field. (1 Kgs 21:24) Birds are often portrayed as flesh eaters. (Gen 15:11; 40:19; Deut 28:26; 1 Sam 17:44) As such, they are instruments of judgment. (Jer 15:3) Birds are also depicted as “the Evil One” who snatches what has been planted from those who don’t understand the Word of God. (Matt 13:19) Being in the air symbolizes their status as *spiritual* entities. The process is seen in Romans 1, where the wrath (judgment) of God is revealed from heaven (birds of the air) against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Why is it revealed, or made manifest? Because what may be known about God is evident, because God has made it evident through the creation. (Rom 1:18-20) Atheists from all disciplines fall into this category, from the scientist to the philosopher and any who embrace their teachings. What they actually know to be God they call “evolution.” Instead of giving God the credit (glory), man is depicted as pulling himself up from the muck and mud through millions of years of natural selection. Man has become the greatest self-achiever, without God’s help. We are, as the psalmist writes, gods.

What are the results? When society rids itself of God, a lack of accountability soon follows. All kinds of sin and wrong thinking runs rampant. All is the result of rejecting the truth, which is why the Word of God wars against this attitude of rebellion.

God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. (Rom 1:24-25)

Romans 1:26-27 goes on to illustrate how homosexuality was the ultimate result. “Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.” The “due penalty” is especially significant today. Homosexuality has opened the floodgate of AIDS, killing millions in its wake. If AIDS had appeared two or three decades earlier, every homosexual would have been rounded up and summarily executed. In today’s culture, however, where nothing is wrong and we are our own gods, this type of conduct is promoted and paraded down Main Street under the guise of Equal Rights. This is summarized in verse 28:

Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

The “what ought not to be done” is the endorsement of illicit conduct, to the degree that it has become an acceptable lifestyle. Not only have we rejected God, but we have now rejected our own scientific knowledge, placing “sexual orientation” ahead of common sense and hard data.

The birds are a metaphor for spiritual destruction, representing the consequence from God for those who violate the natural order of things. People do not acknowledge God. The result: He sends the birds of doom—destruction from the sky (heaven).

Great supper of God: There is a marriage supper of the Lamb, where the righteous are invited to partake. There is another great supper taking place, however. But it is not a feast of blessing, but a great curse upon those who refuse to acknowledge God. They will be devoured, “for our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb 10:29)

Eat the flesh of kings, commanders, mighty men, horses and riders, and all men, small and great: No one who rebels against God, regardless of their position in society, is exempt from His punishment. All flesh had corrupted itself upon the earth (Gen 6:12), and thus all flesh was devoured by the floodwaters.

For the Lord will execute judgment by fire and by His sword on all flesh, and those slain by the Lord will be many. (Isa 66:16)

“A clamor has come to the end of the earth, because the Lord has a controversy with the nations. He is entering into judgment with all flesh; as for the wicked, He has given them to the sword,” declares the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Behold, evil is going forth from nation to nation, and a great storm is being stirred up from the remotest parts of the earth. And *those slain by the Lord on that day shall be from one end of the earth to the other*. They shall not be lamented, gathered, or buried; they shall be like dung on the face of the ground.” (Jer 25:31-33)

Because I shall cut off from you the righteous and the wicked, therefore My sword shall go forth from its sheath against all flesh from south to north. Thus *all flesh* (commanders, mighty men, horses, all men, etc) will know that I, the Lord, have drawn My sword out of its sheath. It will not return to its sheath again. (Ezek 21:4-5)

Both of the prophecies in Jeremiah and Ezekiel refer specifically to Jerusalem’s exile into Babylon. They summarized the *physical* removal and destruction of a nation. Revelation is dealing with both a physical and *spiritual* removal and destruction of disobedient men and women. Rome carried out the physical removal. The spiritual removal was legislative and judicial—the cancellation of God’s covenant with the Jews due to their wickedness.

19:19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army.

What precipitated this conflict? Satan seems to still have influence, as he is still roaming around. Yet he is not part of the battle scene here. This is a war of truth (Word of God) against deception. We need to keep this ever before us, or else we fall into the trap of thinking this is a literal conflict fought on a literal battlefield. The following verses remind us:

Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and *I will make war* against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev 2:16)

*There was war in heaven...*and the great dragon was thrown down...to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Rev 12:7-9)

The dragon was enraged with the woman, and *went off to make war* with the rest of her

offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (Rev 12:17)

They worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, *and who is able to wage war* with him?” (Rev 13:4)

...they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for *the war of the great day* of God, the Almighty. (Rev 16:14)

These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful. (Rev 17:14)

I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and *in righteousness He judges and wages war*. (Rev 19:11)

I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, *assembled to make war* against Him who sat upon the horse, and against His army. (Rev 19:19)

(Satan) will come out to deceive the nations, which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, *to gather them together for the war*; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. (Rev 20:8)

The war is against those who refuse to repent and turn to Christ. It is fought for the purpose of defeating and winning the victory over an enemy. Unrepentant hearts are opposed to (in war against) God. Those who choose to side with the world are also God’s enemies. (James 4:4) We can draw parallels from the OT concerning war, God’s enemies, and the status of His people:

Now it came about when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war, and they return to Egypt.” Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. (Exod 13:17-18)

Has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him. (Deut 4:34-35)

The primary difference between what God did for the Israelites and what He does for Christians is that in Revelation, the enemy assembles but no war is actually fought. They “gather together” but that is the extent of the matter. No conflict takes place, only an immediate judgment, as shown in the next verse.

19:20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the Lake of Fire which burns with brimstone.

The first things defeated are False Israel (the Beast) and the ones who proclaimed lies (false prophet). In verse 19, the Beast was allied with the *kings of the earth*; here, the Beast is associated with the *false prophet*. This suggests that a common government joins the kings of the earth and the false prophet.

Just as the Beast was made up of many people, so too was the false prophet. They are not singular entities, but prevalent attitudes of rebellion and false teachings that were rampant. They caused many to stumble, scrupulously tithing mint, dill and cumin but neglecting the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faith. (Matt 23:23) They traveled land and sea to make proselytes, but by their extreme legalism, turned their converts into “twice the son of hell” that they themselves were. (Matt 23:15) They were adopted (marked or sealed) by the Devil, being led to worship a lie by these false teachers. Thus, the essence of Satan’s kingdom is removed, along with those who proclaimed its power and authority. Their 42-month reign—a rule during distressing times—is brought to an end. At this time, Satan is not seized, only his empire. The Devil had turned over his throne (authority) to the beast. (13:4) The beast is now judged, which means Satan’s authority was now bound and chained. He himself, however, was still free.

Thrown alive: Judged while living, breathing, and at the zenith of their power, is the sense of the Greek. David wrote that the Lord had kept him alive, keeping him from going down into the grave. (Psa 30:3) Those with whom he “walked in sweet fellowship,” those who “walked in the house of God in the throng,” would have death come deceitfully upon them and be *thrown alive into the grave*. (Isa 55:14-15)

Those reserved for the fire (judgment) are depicted as being already dead (John 15:6), which is not the case with Israel and her false teachers. These entities are apparently judged while they are still “in the quick,” which is what essentially happened at Jerusalem’s demise. Those who would not embrace Christ and His kingdom were not even fit for the manure pile. (Luke 14:35) They were to be thrown out, tossed alive out of the kingdom. In a declaration against the teachers of Israel, Jesus gave them this parable concerning the Two Gates:

“When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, *and yourselves thrust out.*” (Luke 13:25-28)

Where would they be thrust? Into this thing called the Lake of Fire, the Final Judgment.

Lake of fire: In Palestine and the surrounding regions, the nearest thing to a lake was the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee (also called Lake Gennesaret). Streams of running water are symbols of vitality and life, both spiritual and natural. Lakes don’t flow as a stream does; they are self-contained and self-sustaining.

While there are many references in the Gospels showing hell to be fire, the Lake of Fire is found only in Revelation. Sodom and Gomorrah had fire and brimstone rained down on them. (Luke 17:29) These two cities were located in the Dead Sea region, which would remind the reader of their judgment. According to any book on the subject, the Dead Sea is aptly named for its total lack of

aquatic life. This is due to the extreme salinity.³ The association of the Dead Sea with the fearful judgment of God, together with the desolation of the place, renders it a striking figure for the final scene of Divine Judgment, though in a spiritual sense. The Lake of Fire then, is a place of torment and symbolizes God's final judgment. Revelation defines it as *the Second Death*. (20:14; 21:8)

19:21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

“The rest”—those apart from the beast and pseudo-prophet—refers to those in verse 18. The birds in midheaven are told to “eat the flesh of kings, commanders, mighty men, horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, small and great.” This group represents all nations opposed to the Gospel. The sword of Christ's mouth kills them. His words judge (destroy) them:

By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? (IE, all nations, whether or not they've heard the Gospel) (Luke 19:22)

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. (John 12:48)

These are spiritual battles, and it is the Word of God that does the “killing.” Who or what does the Word destroy?

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down **strongholds**, casting down **arguments** and every high thing that exalts itself against the **knowledge** of God, bringing every **thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Cor 10:4-6)

The result of this war is not physical bodies lying on a physical earth being eaten by physical birds. These are all spiritual metaphors describing the fate of those who reject the Gospel of Christ. The birds—a symbol of airborne and therefore *spiritual* entities—illustrate the fate of the unrepentant heart.

³ Unlike other salt-water bodies, the Dead Sea contains very little sodium chloride (common table salt). What makes it hostile to aquatic life is its heavy concentration of potassium and magnesium bromides.