



LIFE GROUP NOTES

Week Beginning:

Revelation ch 19 –20

The final victory and Satan's doom



Warm Up

Across the world, couples invest a great deal of time, energy and often huge amounts of money on a wedding. Why is this so?

At whatever level, a sporting victory fills people with emotion; elation and joy. What is the best victory you have ever experienced or witnessed?

Background and context

Chapter 19

There are two big themes in this chapter; a wedding celebration and a victory in battle.

Verses 1-10 start with a hymn of praise over the destruction of Babylon (the prostitute) which leads to a wedding. There is great symbolism here. The adulterous nature of a prostitute and the faithfulness of a marriage. Weddings began in Genesis with Adam and Eve and were part of God's plan for creation. A wedding and the following marriage is a mirror of God's faithfulness to us. That through times of thick and thin, He will remain faithful. The wedding described in the passage is the culmination of God's purposes in creation. The union of Christ and His church.

Verses 11-21 describe a battle between Christ and His army and the Army of Satan. Many have seen this as a physical event in the future, but others view it as more likely to be symbolic, like the beast and the prostitute. The battle and victory is a picture of the ultimate defeat of all pagan powers, a victory over violence itself.

Jesus himself spoke of victory but not, as some thought, over Rome, but over much darker forces. The real battle was against Satan, the one who controlled the pagan/secular empires and led people into rebellion against God. His victory was seen in His death and resurrection. Many of us are overwhelmed by beast-like forces and propaganda that promotes pagan/ secular culture. Other well-meaning people are taken in by the lies and false promises that these systems promote. Chapter 19 is a promise of victory to those overwhelmed and a warning to those taken in. Once we know who Jesus is and what He has done, there is no doubt about the victory.

Chapter 20

This chapter causes great debate amongst Christians, firstly about the post-mortem experiences of believers; spiritual, then physical; and the role of the spiritual existence. Secondly the literal or figurative understanding of 1000 years. (It is the only place in scripture where it is mentioned). Some see John as speaking figuratively as he has done throughout the letter, because as the NT describes, Jesus is already reigning in Heaven. (Matt 28:18, 1 Cor 15:25-28, Eph 2:6). What is it that the souls of the saints are doing in Heaven?

Finally we see the ultimate defeat of humanity's greatest enemies, Satan and death. Satan once had a legitimate role to accuse and expose sin, but he went rogue! The defeat of death and the power of death heralds the new age of peace, unity and eternity with God. All the dead, wherever they may be will be judged. Many have worried that the book of life pointed to salvation through works not faith, but this misses the point of the book. John has already mentioned that the book was created before the foundation of the world (3:5,13:8, 17:8). This is a visual way of backing up Jesus' words in John's Gospel, "*you did not choose me, but I chose you.*" This is grace.

In the face of judgement, Satan and the corrupt earthly systems, including death, cannot stand!

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity

What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand? This could be a time to discuss and share reflections and ideas on the passage or watch a Bible project type video that helps explain things.



Read ch 19:1-10

1. How does the passage describe the intensity of the celebration that takes place?
2. Why is there so much celebration?
3. The marriage of the bride and the Lamb is the centre piece of the passage. Who is the bride? It is also a symbol of what is to come; the re-unification of heaven and earth. Why should this give us cause for celebration?
4. In verse 10 John makes a big mistake. What is it? How are we tempted to make similar mistakes in life?

Read ch 19:11-21

5. What is the significance of the names given to the rider of the white horse?
6. **Read v14-16.** IF this is not a physical battle, then what does it symbolise? What would it look like in today's world?
7. How do we, as Christians, participate in Jesus' victory?
8. Why do beast and false prophet receive such a harsh judgement?
9. How can we help each other from falling prey to delusions and false teachings?

Read ch 20:1-6

10. How does the accuser (dragon) accuse us today? What is his ultimate fate?
11. What is the significance of the length of time Satan is bound?
12. What is the role of those who participate in the "first resurrection"?
13. **Read Matt 28:18, 1 Cor 15:25-28, Eph 2:6.** How do these verses help us understand the timing and the role of those in the first resurrection?

Read ch v 7-15.

14. What is the significance of Satan being released for a short time? (Refer back to the sixth/seventh seals /trumpets... it might help.)
15. What happens to prevent Satan capturing God's beloved city? Why should this give us hope?
16. What is the significance of the books that are opened as the dead gather around the throne?
17. How does knowing your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life change who we are and how we live?
18. Why is your name written in the book? Faith or works?

Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.



We want to encourage the development of prayer, to help everyone grow in confidence in praying. There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.