

Revelation 38

Summary Notes on Chapters 19-20

1. These are the chapters that complete the work of God so far as our world is concerned. Chapter 19 shows the triumph of the Lamb over the forces that have gathered to fight against God and His people. Chapter 20 shows the just reign of the Lamb and the trials that follow it as our world history closes.
2. The Marriage supper of the Lamb...is discussed in 19:7-10. Not a lot is said about it...it is conceivably the completion of the church and her union with Christ...not marriage as we think of it, but the fulfillment of the plan and purposes of God. Those called to the marriage supper (v. 9) are usually thought to be saints other than the church proper although there is a good bit of argument about this. The wife of the Lamb is adorned with righteousness and this is thought to be the church...the body politic of believers since Pentecost...although there is also a lot of discussion on this. In short, we are not told enough to be very dogmatic but just enough to satisfy us to the fact that God is working all things to completion.
3. The warfare of the Lamb against his foes is brief. A sharp sword goes from his mouth...it is, no doubt, the spoken word of God in judgment. The picture is found also in the Old Testament... "with the breath of his lips" he slays the wicked. It will be a judgment of the sort spoken of in the book of Joel when multitudes are in the valley of threshing. The great carnage that results will be a feast to the carnivorous birds and while we do not like to think of it, it is a problem that man has brought to himself.
4. The destruction of the beast in 19:20 will remind one of the passages in Isaiah 24:20 ff. Note that the punishment of Satan remains for a while but the beast and false prophet are immediately dispatched.;
5. The binding of Satan we take rather literally...meaning that he will be put in a place where he cannot exercise his authority or influence. This is an argued view...Satan has always been bound to some extent...but it seems to us that this concept of a 1,000 year period without his influence is so much a part of this chapter that to read it any other way introduces a doubtful method of biblical interpretation that if pursued in other areas might be disruptive of much of the saving work. It seems obvious that the first resurrection precedes this time and that the just are all involved in it. While no "second resurrection" is mentioned as such, it also seems apparent that that is what occurs in regards to the great white throne. So we have believers reigning with Christ through the thousand years. This view is called chiliasm...the belief that there will be a divine kingdom on earth for a period of a thousand years in which the will of God will be immediately honored and the purposes of God forthrightly carried out.
6. The Great White Throne is a judgment for the wicked dead...but the books are opened that their judgment might be just and in accord with their lives. God is fair to all. Not being in the book of life is how one gets to this place and it is an eternal trial.