

## Revelation 19      The end      Isaiah 25:6-9

In the past weeks we made our way through the Book of Revelation, and now we have reached the final chapters. After some pretty grim passages, we are into the more 'positive' parts of the book, but today's passage is still a mixed bag.

This passage describes how Jesus returns, as the rider on the white horse, and for the first time in the book we have the word 'Hallelujah', which means 'Praise the Lord'.

So what is missing here? There are no long bloody battles, as you would have in a movie or in Tolkien. It's all over in a moment, before the decisive battle has well and truly started. Jesus simply overcomes all adversity. Isn't that great?!

Revelation concludes with the expectation of the glorious future that God has for us. As usual, the entire description is in images! The main image of this passage, in verse 7, is that of the meal. John borrows this from Isaiah 25. At the end of time God will be celebrating a great meal, the wedding of his Son to his bride, the church. In anticipation of this we will be celebrating Communion during this service. This common meal is a foretaste of the heavenly glory to come.

Meals were very important in the ancient world, more so than with us. Still today eating together implies belonging together, as children of God. A common meal can mean much to people, it can create a real bond. Part of the success of the Alpha-course is the shared meal at the beginning.

Revelation 19 tells us that we, the church, are the bride of Christ. This raises important questions for each of us: Do you have a white robe? Do you keep it spotless and speckle-less white? In other words, are you a believer and do you strive to live without sin? Without this there will be no access to the heavenly wedding room.

Strangely, Jesus is not mentioned by name in this chapter, but he is nonetheless centre stage; read verses 11-16 again. He is called 'Faithful and True' and 'King of kings and Lord of Lords'. The emperor in Rome also called himself 'lord and god', so the language here is anti-imperial. Once again John reminds us that no-one can serve both Jesus and the emperor.

But not all is well in this chapter. It is an unpopular message, but the enemies of Jesus will not make it into eternity. They will instead be punished, burned, annihilated. Their wrong in life choices are taken seriously. Not all humans will receive eternal life, but only those who have followed Jesus on earth. (Note that I am not speaking about eternity as 'heaven', because we will be given new heavens and a new earth.)

So we and the world have a great future! Are we prepared for Jesus' second coming? As Jesus says at the end of the book: 'Yes, I am coming soon.'