**Revelation**

*Lesson 35 – Revelation 19:1-10*

* Chapter 17 began with “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute….” Then Chapter 18 says “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!” Now we come to Revelation 19 and see rejoicing and celebration in heaven. God’s people and the angelic hosts praise God for the judgment that He has brought.

*Verses 1-4: Worship in Heaven as Celebration*

1. The movement of worship begins with those furthest away from the center of the circles where God sits enthroned as it begins with the “great multitude” singing before verse 4 which then shows the 24 elders and 4 living creatures who are closest to the throne join in the singing.
2. “Hallelujah” literally means “Praise Yah” which is a shortened form of “Yahweh.” So the praise chorus actually begins by commanding “Praise God!”
3. And all those in heaven are commanded to praise God because He has demonstrated His power in the destruction of Babylon, which reveals His glory, and consummates the salvation of His people. Robert Mounce writes, “*Salvation is God’s redemptive program and this has been effected by God’s glorious majesty and power*.”
4. Not only do we worship God because of those things, but also because His judgments are true and just and He has demonstrated that His judgments are true and just because He has judged the great prostitute.
5. And the great prostitute was deserving of judgment because she “corrupted the earth with her immorality” and she had the blood of God’s servants on her hands. The word “corrupt” means “depravity” or “moral ruin” and here it’s used to talk about how Babylon ruined the inner lives of unbelievers through her false teaching and immoral lifestyle.
6. Notice that God has done the avenging here.
7. Then in verse 3 they cry out the command to “Praise God” again. This time they are praising God because the judgment on Babylon is final. Her finality is depicted using the picture of a town being burned to ruins and smoke rising out of the ruins except for Babylon her smoke rises forever.
8. **Isaiah 34:30** – “Night and day it [the land of Edom] shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever. Edom in the OT was an enemy to Israel so that OT picture of Edom’s destruction becomes a type of God’s judgment being poured out on symbolic Babylon, enemy of all of God’s people.
9. In Revelation 14:11, the smoke of the torment of unbelieving individuals goes up forever and ever. There, unbelievers are depicted individually. Here in Rev 19, unbelievers are depicted corporately. Similarly you can speak of God’s elect in reference to specific individuals, but they can also be spoken of corporately as the Body/Bride of Christ.
10. Now those closest to the throne of God in heaven add their own “Hallelujah” in verse 4. **Psalm 106:48** – “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, ‘Amen!’ Praise the LORD! [Hallelujah]”
11. Then from the throne another voice comes commanding all of God’s servants to praise “our God.” Whose voice is this? Since it comes from the throne, some scholars say this is Jesus calling everyone to worship the Father. Others believe it could be Michael, another angel, or 1 of the living creatures. If it is Jesus, then by saying “Our God” Jesus is identifying Himself with His people and leading them in worship as depicted in Hebrews 2:12 where the words “in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise” from Psalm 22:22 are applied to Jesus. And the form of the command to praise indicates a continual praising. The command is to keep on praising God. Don’t stop praising Him. And this command is given to all Christians, whether you were a Christian for a long time on earth or a short time. Whether you were a poor Christian or rich Christian. No matter what your social status, how far along you were in sanctification, etc., all of God’s people, described as His servants, are commanded to praise Him.

*Verses 5-10: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*

1. In response to the command for all of God’s servants, both great and small, to praise God, John again hears the voice of a “great multitude” and they again shout “Hallelujah!” This is our 4th “Hallelujah” in this chapter and this is the only chapter in all of the NT where “Hallelujah” appears.
2. This time the great multitude praises God for his kingship as He is reigning in the fullness of His glory and fullness of strength and the response of all God’s people is rejoicing, exalting, and giving Him all the glory.
3. And in verses 7-8 they begin to sing about the marriage supper of the Lamb. This echoes the words of Jesus in Matthew 9:14-15 where he calls Himself the Bridegroom, Matthew 22:1-14 where in a parable Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a wedding feast, and in Matthew 25:1-13 where Jesus in another parable likens the kingdom of heaven to virgins waiting to meet the bridegroom. Well now the waiting is over and the Bridegroom is about to appear.
4. Jewish marriage had several stages:
   1. Betrothal – here the engagement is agreed to and they are considered to be legally married. Compare 2 Corinthians 11:2.
   2. Interval – during a period of time before the wedding feast, the dowry is paid if it wasn’t paid at the time of betrothal and as the interval comes to a close the bride adorns herself. The bridegroom puts on his best attire and along with his accompaniment of friends they sing while processing to the house of the bride, where he then receives the bride and there is a return procession back to the bridegroom’s house.
   3. Wedding feast – Only now comes the wedding-feast which lasted several days and included the marriage supper.
5. Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:2 says that the church is betrothed to Christ. The Church is the Bride of Christ and He has paid the price for the Church with His own blood. Right now here on earth we are in the interval time of separation, where we are to be preparing ourselves and purifying ourselves to meet the Bridegroom and then at Christ’s return, when the Bridegroom comes, we then have the marriage supper to celebrate and finalize the wedding.
6. Notice verse 7 says the Bride has made herself ready. How has the Church made herself ready for the coming of Christ. Verse 8. God granted to the Church to clothe herself with pure, fine linen. This linen is symbolic for the “righteous deeds of the saints.” God grants the Church to be clothed in holy works through the washing of those works by the blood of the Lamb. It is Christ who makes our works righteous to God by His mediation. The Church was created to do good works and God prepared those works beforehand according to Ephesians 2:10. Here we see both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. God has chosen those who will be a part of His bride, but the bride also has the responsibility to make herself ready by doing good works. God gives the wedding dress to the Church but the Church is responsible for putting it on. Greg Beale says that a transformed life is both the proper and necessary response by those God has justified.
7. There’s no conflict here with salvation by faith alone. Christ purifies us and gives us His righteousness and out of a purified and new heart, we do those things which are pleasing to God and made acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. The righteous deeds bear witness to the fact that we really have been purchased by the blood of the Lamb. Our sanctification demonstrates the reality of our justification.
8. Then the angel tells John to write down a statement and proclaims that all that the angel has been showing to John is true. Who are those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb? God’s elect. God’s people go from being looked at corporately as a Bride, to being looked at individually as wedding guests. Christians, you and I, are pictured as guests at the marriage banquet. And we have been invited by the Sovereign God who has issued us the wedding invitation through the gospel call of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. And we are described as “blessed” which is the same word used in the Beatitudes by Jesus and means something like “truly happy.”
9. Now why would John mistakenly fall at the feet of an angel to worship him? This angel who began speaking all the way back in Revelation 18:1 is said to have “great authority” and make the earth “bright with his glory.” John could have been overwhelmed by the brilliance and power of this angelic being because he reflects the glory of God. In Daniel 10, Daniel prostrates himself after seeing a vision of a man. So John could be overcome just like Daniel was.
10. So the angel reminds John that angels are servants of God just like His chosen people are servants. The angel is simply the giver or vehicle of prophetic revelation, but he’s not Jesus whose Spirit is the source and origin of all prophecy. So this message the angel has brought is all about Jesus, not about the angel. All prophecy has its source in the Spirit of Christ and has as its content the testimony about Christ. Notice the angel points John to worship God and Jesus which is one of the tasks for which angels were created – worship the triune God.

**Message for Us**

1. “Corporate worship is the public savoring of the worth of God and the beauty of God and power of God and the wisdom of God. And therefore worship is an open declaration to all the powers of heaven and to all of Babylon that we will not prostitute our minds or our hearts or our bodies to the allurements of the world. Though we may live in Babylon, we will not be captive to Babylonian ways. And we will celebrate with all our might the awesome truth that we are free from that which will be destroyed.” –John Piper
2. This chapter is comforting and encouraging to us when the world seems so intimidating. At the same time that it seems the Church is progressing toward extinction, the world is hastening on to its destruction. “The church will survive the world and be in bliss when it [the world] is in ruins.” –Matthew Henry
3. “Am I heading to the funeral of this world, where I will be personally condemned to hell forever, or am I heading to an eternity of bliss in union with Christ?” –Joel Beeke
4. “The one thing that will keep you singing your praises and extolling our God is your assurance that he is almighty and sovereign and in control, even if the evil plans of Babylon on earth end up costing you your livelihood or even your life.” –Sam Storms
5. “Before the worlds were made, God the Father chose a bride for His Son and drew up a marriage contract between them. This wedding involves choice, not mutual attraction. It is a one-sided choice, for God chose us in eternity. Christ bought us at Calvary and took us to be His own through the preaching of the gospel. Soon He will come back for us. When He comes back, we will enjoy intimacy and fellowship with Him forever.” –Joel Beeke
6. “As a bride prepares herself for her wedding, we must do likewise. The more we yearn for our marriage with Christ, the more we shall seek for that holiness without which no man shall see Lord. But the less we think of it, the less we will follow the Lord Jesus in this life. During an engagement, those who are betrothed to each other are not allowed to court other people. We must not flirt with sin but push it far from us and say, “I will keep myself pure for the Lord Jesus Christ.” –Joel Beeke