

Revelation 19:1-10

"Here Comes The Groom!"

From wrath & *tribulation*, to worship & *exaltation*. That's the transition we make today as we head *out of* Ch 18 & *into* Ch 19. The *world's system* comes to an end & an incredible *worship service* begins. We transition from the weeping & wailing of the wicked on the earth to the worshiping & rejoicing of the righteous in heaven. Out of Babylon & into heaven.

I love the transition because it seems to me that even in that there's application to be found. "Come out her My people" that was the clarion call of Ch 18. Come out from among the world's system, the world's priorities, the world's drives, desires, ambitions, lures & lusts. We're to realize that lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh & the pride of life is not of the Father, it's of this world & it's passing away, it's coming under judgment. We're to be sanctified & set apart to the Lord, in the world but not of the world. Contact w/out contamination, salt & light: "Yes," but joining in, practicing & participating in her sins? "No."

But here's what I want you to see. As soon as the world's system is brought down & done away w/the Lord comes into focus & heaven explodes in worship... Even so as we learn to "disconnect" from the things of this world, as we learn what it means to crucify the flesh, to deny ourselves; take up our cross, walk in the Spirit & not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. When our worldly priorities are brought down & done away with, Jesus will come into focus & our worship service will explode! When your vision, when my vision of Jesus is unclouded by the flesh, worldly drives, desires & ambitions our heart will burst forth w/worship. God help us to learn the meaning of these words, *"...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."*¹

Think about it, from a spiritual perspective it's hard to even connect the dots. How do we contain ourselves when it comes to worship? Oh, I'm all for decency & order but we have no problem shouting & showing enthusiasm at the concert of our favorite band, or watching our favorite team. But the amount of reservation we show when it comes to the One who has redeemed our soul is staggering. I'm sure the angels scratch their heads & wonder how we reserve ourselves...

Well, in Ch 19 the governor comes off & the throttle is wide open. In Vs 20 of Ch 18 the exhortation was given...(Read) In Ch 19 heaven is obliged to obey...

¹ The New King James Version. 1982 (Mk 12:30). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Vs 1-2

For those of you who've been w/us throughout our study of the book of Revelation, you know that these words "After these things" are key words throughout the book. It's the same Greek words "meta tauta" that we ran into initially all the way back in Ch 1 Vs 19 when Jesus gives to John the Divine outline of the book. "Write the things which you have seen, & the things which are & the things which will take place *after this*." (meta tauta) After what? After the things of Ch's 2 & 3 (the things of the church).

We're able to deduct that because John wrote what he'd seen up to that point (Vs 1-18), that which currently is (Ch's 2-3) & then when we get to Ch 4 John says, "After these things" (meta tauta), after what things? The things of Ch's 2-3. **Everything from Ch 4 forward in the book of Rev is yet future. The church is raptured in Ch 4 Vs 1 (John typifying the church), we have the heavenly scene of Ch 4-5, the Lamb takes the scroll & in Ch 6 begins to loose it's seals & the Great Tribulation begins upon the earth. This phrase sort of guides us systematically through the book & this is the last time it occurs.**

"After these things", what things? The things of Ch's 17 & 18 (really we could say after the things of the Great Tribulation because the Great Tribulation has ended at this point. **All that is left is for Christ to return, put down the remnant of rebellion, establish His millennial Kingdom, crush one more final rebellion @ the end of the 1,000 yrs, create a new heaven & a new earth & we'll all live happily ever after! Amen? Praise God!**)

John hears a loud voice, as of a multitude (picture a stadium of people times 10,000) in heaven saying, "Alleluia! Salvation & glory & honor & power belong to the Lord our God!"

You might find it interesting to know that the word "Alleluia" (which is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew "Hallelujah") isn't found anywhere in the NT w/the exception of Rev 19 & it's found 4 times in this Ch w/in the context of the Great Tribulation coming to an end, the uniting of Christ to His bride & the coming again of J.C. to the earth, Hallelujah!

The word "Hallelujah" simply means "Praise the Lord" "Hallel" = Praise "Jah" = God or Yahweh. It's an imperative verb which means it's a command, or an exhortation. We might consider it both an exhortation & an invitation because presumably if I encourage you to praise the Lord my heart is already there or is going there as well. **Heaven receives the invitation, the exhortation & is eager to respond, would to God that we were eager to respond to & obey the invitations & the exhortations of the word of God... So this worship time is a shout of praise! "Hallelujah" "Praise the Lord!" "Salvation & glory & honor & power belong to the Lord our God!"**

Have you ever stopped to really contemplate & meditate on these truths? Salvation, glory, honor & power belong to the Lord our God. They are intrinsically, inherently His.

Think about it... Salvation is of the Lord, it belongs to the Lord & comes from the Lord. I stop to point that out because so often it's something that we take for granted & can easily begin to claim as our own. Years ago we used to sing a worship chorus out of the 51st psalm. "Create in me a clean heart O God & renew a right spirit w/in me, & cast me not away from Thy presence O God & take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, & renew a right spirit w/in me." For a long time I would sing, "Restore unto me, the joy of my salvation", but here's the deal, it's not mine... salvation belongs to the Lord! Isaiah Ch 12, *"Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'"*² & Again, *"Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other."*³ Over & over again the scriptures declare in no uncertain terms that Salvation belongs to the Lord. But I'm so glad...that He's willing to *gift* such a precious gift to even me, by His grace through simple faith in J.C. We serve a merciful God whose compassions fail not...

"Honor", it's a word that speaks of intrinsic value or worth, He is worthy (inherently). You & me...not so much, in me (that is in my flesh) (Rom 7:18) *nothing* good dwells. Yet once again God is merciful to share Himself w/us. Paul tells us in 2 Cor (4:7) that we have this *treasure* (the gospel of J.C. [or for that matter the Person of J.C. through the Person & work of His Spirit]) in earthen vessels, that is, in we who believe. We (in & of ourselves) have nothing of eternal value to offer God. However Christ *in* you, now that's honorable, now God can use your life.

"Power" belongs *to the Lord*. Yet once again He is so gracious to share His power w/us. It's through the power & the Person of the Holy Spirit in us that we're able to lead lives set apart to Him, that we're able to overcome sin. He gifts us through His Spirit that we might be equipped & enabled to bless Him & build up our brothers & sisters. All these things belong to the Lord...

"Hey preacher, you skipped one, 'glory,'" yeah, that one's not up for grabs. Again; Isaiah 42, *"I am the Lord, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another,"*⁴

As a matter of fact, all the other things that God does give only serve to magnify His glory.

² The New King James Version. 1982 (Is 12:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ The New King James Version. 1982 (Is 45:22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. 1982 (Is 42:8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He saves us to His glory, Christ in us brings Him glory (magnifies His grace which builds upon His glory) the power He gives us to lead victorious lives brings Him glory...However, read John 17 & there you'll discover that God does share His glory w/One... guess Who... J.C. If God won't share His glory w/another & yet He & Jesus share it, what does that tell us about Jesus? He's God.

Vs 2

"For true & righteous are His judgments," over & over again throughout the judgments of God the declaration has been reaffirmed that the judgments of God are true & righteous. It's undoubtedly one of the attributes of God that Satan brings the largest amount of questions & criticisms. Even in the beginning Satan caused Eve to question the judgment of God concerning the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil. "Why wouldn't God want you to eat it? He's not fair, He's holding out on you..." He was questioning God's judgment. What about the person that never heard the gospel? Why would God allow such a young person to die? Why do seeming "good" people suffer while blatantly wicked people suffer? On & on the questions go...

In truth however those things are "judgments", they're the result of living in a sinful, fallen world which isn't God's fault, man made that choice. But because we want a scapegoat & don't want to be accountable for our own choices we like to blame God. Sin is responsible for the haphazard tragedies in life, God is the One who has been working throughout history to redeem fallen man & restore His creation.

However when God *does* judge, His judgments are always true & righteous. When we can't see it, God's not wrong, we are. God is holy, just, perfect & true; we're askewed, twisted, sinful & fallen.

Here God is praised for the fact that He brought down Babylon, false religion & rebellion against Himself. God hates religion...why? Because it seeks to establish a means of self-righteousness before Him that circumvents Christ & the price He paid & relies upon one's own works. But it will always fail: why? Because man starts from a flawed position; a sinful finite position. & Sinful, finite man can never reach up to a sinless, infinite God. So any/every religion must fail.

Christianity however isn't finite man seeking to reach an infinite God. It's the infinite God reaching down to finite man. It's no problem for the infinite to reach down to the finite, for the sinless to reach down to the sinful. So Christianity isn't based upon what man does for God. But what God has done for man in the Person of J.C. (Big difference, huh?)

Vs 3-5

In Vs 3 the worship level rises again! “Alleluia!” Not only has the rebellious world system & false religion been judged; it’s a sentence to be carried out throughout eternity w/out the possibility of parole. God’s judgment is as eternal as is God Himself. If God is eternally righteous, then His righteous judgment *must* stand forever

Now in Vs 5 all who belong to God, all who *revere* God are called upon to *praise* God. “Both small & great”, now as for who belongs to which category I don’t know but I have a feeling we’ll all be pleasantly surprised to find out. We have a tendency to see things backwards here on earth. Greatness equals how much money you make, how many people you boss around & how famous you become. Not so in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, *“You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*⁵ & Of course Paul tells us in Philippians that having humbled Himself more than any other, that God exalted Christ above any other. So...it’s not required in stewards to be found rich, or famous, but to be found what? *“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”*⁶ So this whole “small & great” business will be interesting won’t it?

Ok... In Vs 6 we “turn the page”. Heaven has been rejoicing over the ruin of religion & rebellion against God. Now, Babylon is gone & praise ascends as the bride is presented...notice.

Vs 6-9

Can we just say that the pinnacle of praise upon the earth is but a dim shadow (at best) of what’s going to happen in heaven on this day & I for one expect to be apart of it! John heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters, (think of the deafening roar of Niagara Falls), as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” BTW this is where Handel got his inspiration for “Messiah”, you’re familiar w/the “Hallelujah” chorus? This is where it stems from...

& As long as we’re on the subject of praise, let me just say again that our praise should be whole-hearted, passionate & enthusiastic.

⁵ The New King James Version. 1982 (Mk 10:42-45). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Co 4:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

“Let us be glad, & rejoice & give Him glory!” I think too often we’re prone to make praise & worship & self-indulgent experience. We gauge the worship service based upon how we “feel”, if we got any “warm fuzzies” or not. While I’m all for drawing near to the Lord & of course we desire to sense the Lord drawing near to us, can I just say that how you “feel” or how I “feel” about the worship is irrelevant. The question is, “How does God feel about it?” As He searches my heart, does He find unreserved whole-hearted worship, or a ½ hearted offering that wasn’t really emotionally stirred so refrained from giving Him my all?

I’m not saying that there’s never a time for stillness before the Lord; but as we assemble as a corporate gathering of lovers of J.C. why would we not seek to lift the roof off this place in genuine enthusiastic passionate praise of our Savior? We’re not here to gauge the service based on how we feel, we’re here to give God glory regardless of how we feel because He’s worthy! “Let us be glad & rejoice & give Him glory...”

“...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, & His wife has made herself ready.” Typically marriages will focus on the bride; this wedding focuses on the *Bridegroom*. & It’s interesting that it’s referred to as the marriage of the “Lamb” as opposed to the marriage of the “Lord” or the “King”. The title that Jesus would have emphasized throughout eternity is that of “the Lamb”. This is the title that speaks of His love & His sacrifice for His bride, the purchase price that He paid for His church.

Now I’m not going to pretend to know exactly what all this entails. But what I do know is that this union that will take place between Jesus & His church is so intimate, so close that it can only be compared to a marriage between a man & a woman. It’s the closest relationship that God has ordained for man so God makes that correlation for us.

It’s all the more fascinating when you get a glimpse of the marriage process in ancient Israel. There were 2 parts to a marriage ceremony; there was the betrothal & then there was the actual union of the couple. During the betrothal period they were considered married though they weren’t physically together, however they were both bound by the obligation of faithfulness.

Basically the way it worked is that the would be bridegroom would leave his father’s house & negotiate a price for his bride known as the dowry. Once it was settled between the bridegroom & the father of the bride, the bridegroom would leave (now betrothed) to return to his father’s house so as to add on to it, to prepare a place for him & his bride to be.

Meanwhile the bride would be preparing herself (her gown, sending invitations etc.)

When the Father inspected the house & considered it ready he would send the son to retrieve his bride, she knew he'd be coming, but didn't know when. The groom would appear suddenly & the shout would go before him (the bridegroom is coming), he would snatch up his bride, take her back to his father's house & enter the bridal chamber for 7 days, at which time there would be a grand celebration.

Now, Jesus was sent from heaven to pay a purchase price for His bride. The price would be the greatest price He could possibly pay, His blood. At the shedding of His blood (death & resurrection) you & I as His bride became betrothed. Now He's gone away, what did He say? *"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*⁷ Meanwhile we're to prepare ourselves, watching waiting, adorning ourselves w/good works. We don't know the day nor the hour but we know He's coming. The bible teaches He'll be preceded by a shout & then we'll be called up to meet w/the Lord in the air & where He is we will be also. Then there will be this 7 yr period that the bible identifies as the great tribulation while we are w/Him in heaven, He will then emerge again w/us & there will be feasting & celebration (the marriage supper of the Lamb).

That's what we're entering into here, the consummation, the celebration, "...the marriage of the Lamb has come, & His wife has made herself ready."

Now I've officiated a # of weddings throughout my time in ministry & w/out exception the bride will always make herself ready. Some take more time, some less, but all prepare. Question: How are you preparing to unite w/J.C.? Question: How do you prepare to unite w/J.C.?

Vs 8 points to both God's sovereignty & man's responsibility. "To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean & bright." This is God's sovereign grace. Paul in speaking of the things that counted for his gain concerning religious works (Hebrew of Hebrews, Pharisee, persecuting the church, circumcised the 8th day etc) as loss. He said, *"...that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;"*⁸ This is that which is granted, God in His grace imputes to us the righteousness of Christ by faith.

Write it down, look it up later Isaiah 61:10.

⁷ The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 14:2-3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ The New King James Version. 1982 (Php 3:8-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But we also see very clearly here the phrase, “The righteous acts of the saints.” This is where man’s responsibility comes in. I’ll just give you 1 reference for the sake of time, but trust me there are many. The bible is clear, *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*⁹ So initially being found in Christ, that’s paramount; that’s salvation (imputed righteousness). However then we’re to walk in obedience to Christ; good works, sanctification (all w/in the context of submission & surrender to the working of His Spirit in our lives). & Somehow & in someway those good works will adorn your garment on that day. You have a part in how your “wedding garment” is adorned... Brings back the question; in what way are you preparing to unite w/your Lord on that day?

Of course we can’t help but note the contrast between the pride & corruption of the harlot as compared to the purity & humility of the bride of Christ.

Vs 9-10

To give you just a glimpse at how overwhelming this happening will be we see how the 1 human that got just a snapshot of the even responded. He fell at the feet of the messenger to worship him...

The angel immediately brings correction to him, “Don’t do that! I’m just a servant like you; worship God!” Don’t worship creation, worship the Creator; it’s interesting that Jesus received (s) the worship of both men & angels. Now the angel said to worship God, yet Jesus receives the worship of every created thing, what does that make Him? God.

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Or another way to understand that, “In the volume of the book it is written of Me” (in reference to Christ).

The essence of prophecy, the study of the testimony isn’t to reveal future (primarily), it’s to point us to & take us to the feet of Jesus. (Let’s go there now in prayer).

Prayer Points:

Lord, what an exciting area of scripture we come to today. How it makes our hearts hungry to see You face to face. We’re so thankful for Your grace & mercy, Your salvation that You so freely give, the honor you bestow upon in entrusting to us the gospel & the power of Your Spirit that we might be the overcomers You’ve called us to be. Lord, may we be obedient to You, may we walk in the good works that You’ve prepared for us & may we be adorned for You; bringing glory to You on that Day...

Big difference between religion & Christianity. Believe me when I tell you that the last thing God wants for you is to become religious. But He does desire a relationship w/you through the Person of J.C. who has loved you & paid the purchase price of His blood for you...you can leave here a new creation today, robed in white, pure and clean through faith in J.C. Come to Jesus just as you are, let God wash you & cleanse you, forgive you & make you new.

⁹ The New King James Version. 1982 (Eph 2:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.