THE WEDDING OF THE LAMB

Revelation 19:1-10

Key Verse: 19:7

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.”

As we studied, chapters 17 and 18 are a detailed description of the doom of Babylon, the kingdom of the Antichrist. Chapters 17 and 18 and 19:1-10 are an interlude between the seven bowl judgements of last plagues and the glorious victory of the returning Messiah. This passage of 19:1-10 is a heavenly vision of joy and gladness in victory, which includes the condemnation of the great prostitute, which had been done, and the wedding of the Lamb with his bride, which is to come. In this passage, the word, “Hallelujah” is mentioned 4 times. “Hallelujah” is a transliteration of the Hebrew word “halal” – meaning “praise” – and “yah”, the first syllable of Yahweh, the name of God. There are several reasons for heavenly Hallelujahs. One important reason is that the wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

**First, the condemnation of the great prostitute (1-4).** Verse 1 says, “After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: ‘Hallelujah!...” “After this” refers to the destruction of Babylon and the rejoicing of heaven. Now the rejoicing extends to “Hallelujah!” in heaven after the lament of people on the earth. The description of the Lord’s returning to establish his kingdom begins from verse 11 in this chapter. So between the destruction of Babylon at the end of the great tribulation and just before Christ’s kingdom being established, in that little time we are taken to heaven to see the great rejoicing of Hallelujahs.

Here, we hear the word “Hallelujah” for the first time in this book of Revelation, even in the whole New Testament, and only in this chapter of Revelation. Its meaning is “Praise the Lord.” It is used here after the completion of God’s judgment on the earth. In the Old Testament, “hallelujah” is a special word reserved for the joy of those who are delivered from their enemies by God’s saving might. In the New Testament it seems that this word “hallelujah” is reserved till this point. Here, the sound of “Hallelujah” was like a roar of a great multitude.

After “hallelujah”, the sound of a great multitude continues, “Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.” The next word that comes after is “salvation”. At the time of the presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple, Simeon took the baby in his arms and praised God, saying, “…my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people…” (Lk. 2:30). In Acts, when Apostle Peter was brought to Sanhedrin, he testified to Jesus before them, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Ac. 4:12). In Revelation, we remember that a great multitude who came out of the great tribulation cried out in a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (7:10). And when Satan and his angels were hurled to the earth after losing the battle in heaven against Michael and his angels, John heard a loud voice in heaven say, “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ” (12:10). Now here in heaven the sound like a great multitude says, “Hallelujah! Salvation belongs…to our God.” Apostle Paul said in Romans 13:11, “The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when you first believed.” Here, the salvation Paul meant is ultimate salvation from sin and a fallen world and oppressing wicked people and eternal judgment. This is complete and full salvation. Such salvation has come with glory and power. God’s glory is put on display. God’s power is manifest. God’s majestic glory is now seen revealed in judgment. The first reason for Hallelujah is because salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

Then, the voice says, “for true and just are his judgments.” A second reason for Hallelujah is “justice is meted out. In chapter 15, when the angel in charge of water said after the first three bowl judgments, “You are just in these judgments…” the altar responded, “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments” (15:7). Now here after all the judgments were poured out on the earth, now in heaven these words are reiterated with the prelude of Hallelujah. “true and just are his judgments.” This world where Satan rules is full of unjust judgments. But God’s judgments are true and just and silent all the mouths of human beings and Satan and his angels. This is the joy of righteousness.

The voice of a great multitude says continually, “He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earthy by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” Here is one important case of God’s true and just judgments, the judgment of the great prostitute. As we studied, the great prostitute is referred to the world religious system supported by the political and economic power of the beast, the Antichrist. She corrupted the earth by her adulteries. 17:2 says, “With her the kings of the earth committed adulteries and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.” And 18:3 says, “For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her.” She led the kings and inhabitants of the earth to turn away from the true God and be utterly corrupted with spiritual prostitution and then physical prostitution. God seemed to be tolerant to all those corruptions of the earth. But the holy God has his own time. I was surprised to hear that since abortion was legalized in the US by the supreme court in 1973, for the last 48 years 62 million unborn babies were killed in US, (which is about 3,500 every day). It was one result of people’s turning away from God the Creator. Here is God’s condemnation for the great prostitute, who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.

And she shed the blood of many saints: in 16:6, “they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets”, in 17:7, “…the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore the testimony of Jesus”, and in 18:24, “In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth”, which is end of God’s judgments poured out from chapter 6. When the saints were persecuted and their blood was shed, God seemed to be endlessly patient and silent. So the martyred souls cried out in 6:10, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” But there is the end of the divine patience and silence. It was written in 16:6, “for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserved.” God is the God of vengeance. Deuteronomy 32:43 says, “Rejoice, O nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies and make atonement for his land and people.” And in 18:6 a voice from heaven said, “Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion form her own cup.” And here the voice says, “He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” It is reported that 100,000 Christians are murdered each year. It seems that the trend of the world is targeting the removal of true Christians in the world. It is clear that the more the world becomes secular, turning away from God, the more the world is immoral and hostile to God and the more increasingly persecutions and murders of true believers take place. We are expected to have more and more severe persecutions even in western democratic countries, as the end time comes. But we should remember this hallelujah, “He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.

And in verse 3, “Again they shouted: ‘Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.’” The voice of a great multitude shouted one more time, “Hallelujah!” Why? The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever. What does this mean? We remember the description in 18:9, “When the kings of the earth…see the smoke of her burning,” and in 18:18, “When they see the smoke of her burning,..” There was even a burning of the great prostitute in 17:16 when the Antichrist system burned her up with fire. And we also see the expression in 14:13, “And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever.” The meaning of this is that the punishment is permanent: no more corrupting the earth, no more persecution, no more rebellion. There will be full salvation and complete justice and righteousness.

Then verse 4 says, “The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: ‘Amen, Hallelujah!” Here is the last worship of twenty-four elders in Revelation. As we studied, they represent the church. In chapter 4, whenever the four living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who live for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever (4:9-10). In chapter 5, when the Lamb came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. They sang a new song. When many angels numbering thousands upon thousands and every creature joined in the praise, the four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped (5:8, 14). And in chapter 11 when there were loud voices in heaven, “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever,” the twenty-four elders who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God (11:16). Here is the last worship of the twenty-four elders, when the voice of a great multitude said, “Hallelujah” repeatedly, they worshiped God and replied to their “Hallelujah” saying, “Amen, Hallelujah!” “Amen” means “to agree,” “so be it,” “let it happen.” “I mean it, Lord.” It is affirmation, agreement. They join in praise crying, “I agree. I mean it, Lord. Let it be. Hallelujah!” What a beautiful worship with Hallelujah!

**Second, the wedding of the Lamb (5-10).** Verse 5 says, “Then a voice came from the throne, saying: ‘Praise our God, all you his servants you who fear him, both small and great.’” It is likely that the circle of Hallelujah becomes bigger and bigger (amplified to a crescendo). First, a great multitude, who are probably a great company of the heavenly host of angels, then the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures join. Now a voice from the throne calls “all you his servants who fear him, both small and great” to join in this praise. “Praise our God” is a present imperative. “All you his servants, you who fear him” most likely refers to believers, all the believers who are in heaven, which would mean the church (the glorified saints, raptured into heaven) and those saved during the time of the tribulation (tribulation saints), the spirits of Old Testament saints.

The phrase “small and great” was also written in 11:18, when the twenty-four elders worshipping God, saying, “…The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great…” “Small and great” could mean “it does not matter whether having considerable influence and power in life or being entirely unknown to the world.” What matters is fearing God. Now here “all of you who reverence and worship, all of you worshiping saints, small and great”, praise our God. What an encouragement!

So verse 6 says, “Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder…” Now the already deafening praise becomes even more deafening. John describes it as the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder. It’s like a million Niagara falls. It seems that the loudness of praise deafens him as millions of holy angels and redeemed souls praise God.

They shout, “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.” Here is the last “Hallelujah” All joined in this praise, small and great. Now the reason for their hallelujah is shifted from his judgment to his reigning, saying, “Our Lord God Almighty reigns.” This is the whole theme of the Bible and the ultimate purpose of God’s history. The actual reigning of Christ is written in chapter 20 and the throne of God and of the Lamb is mentioned in chapter 22. Surely when God’s judgment was completed, it meant the reign of God. So here, the reason for Hallelujah continues, saying, “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.”

Now verse 7 says, “Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.” Here is another reason for Hallelujah, very significant, “For the wedding of the Lamb has come.” It is in the reign of God. Here is the first mention of the bride of the Lamb in Revelation. It is followed by the bride written in 21:2, “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband”, and in 21:9, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb” and in 22:17, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!” We know that Christ’s church is his bride. Yet, there is no direct mention of the church being his bride in the Bible, though there is a clear implication of it. In Matthew 9:15, when John’s disciples came and asked Jesus about his disciples’ not fasting, Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; they will fast.” Here Jesus used the imagery of marriage and referred to himself as a bridegroom. This is written in Mark 2:19 and Luke 5:34. In John 3:29, in his testimony about Jesus John the Baptist said, “The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.” Here John the Baptist views himself as the friend of the bridegroom and Christ as the bridegroom. So here is more of this same imagery that sees the Lord Jesus Christ as a bridegroom. In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul said, “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised/betrothed you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.” Here in Paul’s beautiful imagery believers in the Corinthian church were regarded as the bride betrothed to Christ as her husband. Then Ephesians 5:22-33, he explained the relationship between husbands and wives in light of the relationship between Christ and his church, his body. He said, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (5:25-26). So clearly the imaginary is that the church is the bride of Christ. Now in Revelation it is written, “the wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.” So it is right to say that the bride of the Lamb is his church.

The expression, “the wedding of the Lamb has come” draws our attention. Certainly, the Lamb refers to Christ Jesus. Yet, it says “the wedding of the Lamb has come” instead of “the wedding of Christ has come.” In Revelation, Jesus was introduced as the Lamb no less than 30 times, while as Christ less than 10 times. The Lamb is depicted as sacrificial and victorious. The Lamb’s first appearance is being slain and with his blood shed, purchasing men (5:6, 9). 7:14 says about the blood of the Lamb in which the tribulation saints have washed their robes and made them white, and 12:11, the blood of the Lamb with which the redeemed overcame the devil’s accusation. Then in chapter 13:8, the Lamb that was slain is seen again. Then he is the Shepherd (7:17) and standing on Mount Zion (14:1). The Lamb overcomes the war as Lord of lords and King of kings (17:14). So how beautiful and great this wedding is! We know that the wedding is the pinnacle of human joy. While the great prostitute who corrupted the earth was condemned and while there was no voice of the bridegroom and bride in Babylon, the wedding of the Lamb with his bride has come. This wedding is a perfect and most beautiful wedding that cannot be compared to any wedding in the world. How great the joy of the Father God and of the Lamb and of his bride! The wedding of the Lamb is the climax of God’s redemptive history as the wedding of Adam and Eve was the climax of God’s creation. This wedding of the Lamb is our expectation and longing.

His bride has made herself ready. His bride has made herself ready. She is ready now. She has been presented in a glorified condition with absolute purity. She is a flawless, spotless, blameless virgin without blemish. The bride has made herself ready by the grace of Christ Jesus and the power of God and by the work of the Spirit.

Then verse 8 says, “Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” And 19:14 says, “The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.” We remember that in the church of Sardis there were a few who have not soiled their clothes. Jesus said, “They will walk with me, dressed in white…” (3:5) And the tribulation saints have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (7:14). So we can infer that she is dressed in white cleansed by the blood of the Lamb and made righteous by his atoning sacrifice. We can think further, here.

Fine linen was the most expensive and the loveliest of cloth. The word bright, “*lampron*”, means glistening, shining, radiant. Clean, “*katharon*”, means also pure. It is written in 21:21, “…The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.” So what is on the bride here is this expensive, magnificent, beautiful, fine linen. And it is radiant, shining, pure, transparent. It is a transparent kind of brilliance. It’s a kind of glory. We are reminded of Colossians 3:4, “When Christ, who is your life, appears then you also will appear with him in glory.”

And in verse 8 in parenthesis, “Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.” Again, saints are to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ Jesus. All unrighteous sinners are made righteous and holy through the redemption by Christ Jesus, who is our righteousness, holiness and redemption. But here the righteous acts of the saints is mentioned. Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” Here fine linen, bright and clean, is the reward from the Lord for those who lived a life of faith even to the point of giving one’s life to him. We are reminded of what the risen Christ said to the church in Smyrna, “Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Apostle Peter expressed it this way in 1 Peter 2:24, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.” And then he said in 1 Peter 5:4, “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

When we think of the bride of the Lamb made ready with fine linen, we are greatly encouraged to live a life faith, doing the acts of faith in his grace of salvation, following our Lord Jesus to be like him more and more inside out.

In verse 9, “Then the angel said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”’ And he added, ‘These are the true words of God.’” These invitees include Old Testament saints and tribulation saints. This wedding supper of the Lamb ensures the wedding, the blessed wedding of the Lamb. What a picture of the whole history of God! Of course, the main figures of the wedding are the bridegroom and the bride. But later on all the saints of all ages are included in the bride group to be the wife of the Lamb in chapter 21, where the name of 12 tribes of Israel and the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Again, this is called the wedding of the Lamb! And this is an analogy (imagery) to describe the close relationship between his believers and Christ, the intimate union, in the way human languages could describe.

The church functions, then, as the bride during the presentation in heaven, presentation on earth. The church is enlarged to encompass the glorified saints of the past, reaches the earth, and then encompasses all those who are saved during the time of the millennium. That period of time is the wedding/marriage supper (Isa. 25). The final event is when the new heaven and the new earth are created. The marriage is consummated. All the redeemed are folded into the bride. They all become residents in the bridal city, the new Jerusalem. It descends and becomes the capital city of the new heaven and the new earth.

John must have been amazed as one who belongs to the twelve tribes of Israel and also to the twelve apostles of the Lamb! So at this he fell at the feet of the angel to worship him. But the angel said to John, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” The fellow servants of God are those who hold to the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit, the heart of prophecy. Prophecy means preaching, proclaiming, speaking forth. The very heart and the very soul, the very spirit, the very breath of all preaching is the testimony of Jesus. And the angel says, “I am sent to help preachers and apostles and prophets to give testimony and witness to Jesus because that is the soul of all preaching.”

Thank God for this passage of hallelujah. There are shouts of Hallelujah, because salvation and glory power belong to our God, his judgments are true and just, smoke of man’s world rises forever and ever, and because our Lord God Almighty reigns, and finally because the wedding of the Lamb has come along with the wedding supper of the Lamb. Keeping Hallelujah in our hearts may we prepare ourselves as his bride clothed in his righteousness and to be given fine linen, bright and clean.