

Hallelujah! He Comes!

Revelation 19:1-21

by Dellen Ludwig

You are cordially invited to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb! It will be the event of the ages. Absolutely everyone who is anyone in the Kingdom will be there: Adam and Able, Barnabas and Bartholomew, Carol and Chuck: and that's just the ABC's! The setting will be more regal than you can even imagine and the cuisine – divine!

The anticipation has been growing for this event through all of history! The venue has been constructed for this very occasion and the bride has been preparing herself in anticipation of her majestic day – all I can tell you is that her gown is pure white linen. The wedding guests have all been eagerly waiting for this day since they first received their invitations! The preparations are complete. Only the appearance of the Bridegroom is missing, to start off the celebration of eternity!

All throughout the book of Revelation, the Lord increasingly revealed God's wrath on sinful mankind. We studied last week about the three-fold woes expressed because of the fall of Babylon. But that was the reaction on the earth. Today, we follow John's visions back up toward heaven.

Now, our attention is drawn to hear, The Three-fold Hallelujah over Babylon's fall. Next, we will consider The Time for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. And finally, our text will show The Triumph over the Beast. Chapter 19 of Revelation is a welcome ray of light compared to all that has been going on across the face of the earth.

The first eight verses of chapter 19 announce **The Three-fold Hallelujahs** the Apostle John heard in heaven. The first of the three sounded from heaven as described in verse one: "After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah!' Salvation and glory and power belong to our God." [Revelation 19:1]

The word "hallelujah" is not found anywhere else in the New Testament, but is rather most familiar in the Psalms. There are fifteen Psalms that either begin or end with Hallelujah or its translation, "Praise ye the Lord." The last part of the word, "jah", is an abbreviation of Yahweh. Next term in People of the Word we will have the privilege of studying Psalms and Proverbs. Here, the great multitude in heaven burst out with praise to Yahweh because of His holy justice that has been dealt to the corrupting influence of Babylon.

Verses 2 and 3 expound on this praise, saying: "'for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.' And again, they shouted: 'Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.'" [Revelation 19:2,3]

How many times have we longed for the wicked on the earth to receive justice for their wrong-doings? Here, the believers in heaven roared out their joy because the worst evil perpetrators were receiving the justice of the Lord God Almighty. Among those who were cheering were the martyrs who had been killed because of that evil. They cheered because the Lord, "has avenged on her the blood of his servants." (v.2)

We will find the word servant three times in chapter 19; in verses 2, 5, and 10. "Servant" here in verses 2 and 5 uses the Greek word, "doulos." It speaks of servitude; being in subjection to another, without any idea of bondage. Jesus Christ is the best example of this voluntary serving. Philippians 2:6-8 tells us, "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!"

Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to become servants to each other and to all other believers. This is the way He has ordered His kingdom; to be a kingdom of servants and priests. And the servants, spoken of in these verses, followed their Lord's pattern by giving their life blood as they obediently served Him, even to their deaths, which was now avenged.

In verse 4 the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, who always sing the praises of Yahweh, again fell on their faces in worship of God bringing the second “Hallelujah.” They joined the rest of the voices of the multitude that was shouting, by crying out their own, “Amen, Hallelujah!”

Remember that the word “Amen” means, “so be it.” They were showing their agreement with all the Lord God had done on earth and all of the praise offered Him in heaven. Even these revered elders recognized that their Lord God had brought justice on Babylon and vengeance on the persecutor of His servants, in absolute accord with His sovereignty and holiness.

As the second “Hallelujah” echoed in reverberation, the third “Hallelujah” encouraged the celebration to continue. In verse 5 we read, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!” [Revelation 19:5] All of the saints in heaven are full of praise for their God and King who has brought full destruction to Satan’s government and ended his evil reign. And now this voice announced the event all of heaven had been waiting for -

The Time for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb

Their thunderous response tells about their joyful anticipation as a huge multitude of voices shouted out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord God Almighty reigns. 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. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)” [Revelation 19:6-9]

Handel, when writing his music for these words, established a tune in my head for his chorus that I automatically hear when I read these words. I once sang in an Easter concert that included several church choirs as well as my own high school choir. It was magnificent. But I must admit that we have no idea of what heavenly tune these words will take!

All we are told is that it includes such a great multitude of people that their voices will sound like a huge waterfall! It will put thunder to shame in power and volume! They are shouting, after all, about their love, their Lord God, their Bridegroom! It is time for the wedding feast – at last!

The bride is ready. She is dressed in the clean, bright, white linen provided for her by the Bridegroom. Isaiah 61:10b states, “For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.” 2 Corinthians 5:21 verified, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

The robe of righteousness is given to all those who would answer his call. It’s the garment required to even enter the Kingdom. Jesus in his parable of the wedding banquet threw out an attendee who had not come in the proper wedding clothes. Matthew 22:13 said, “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Without Christ’s righteousness, no one can enter His Kingdom.

Verse 8 explains that the “Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.” [Revelation 19:8b] His bride, the church, understands any “righteous acts” done on the earth are the result of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. He fills us and empowers us to make us desire to do good deeds in Jesus’ name in response to God’s blessings, but they don’t earn God’s righteousness. That is only attained through faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Being dressed in simple white linen is in direct opposition to the gaudy scarlet and purple dress of the great prostitute described as being decorated with glittering gold, precious gems and pearls. [Revelation 17:4] Now the bride is ready for her Bridegroom, dressed in the pure white linen of the robe of righteousness.

The exact timing of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb is not given. John’s visions were not always in sequential order. But it seems fitting to be recorded here, after the fall of Babylon. The Bridegroom has secured His Kingdom by defeating the earthly kingdom of the usurper, who was trying to say that all earthly people belonged to him and needed his mark on their foreheads or hands to prove it.

Our memory verse revealed a distinction between the people who are the bride of Christ and those who are not. “If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.” [2 Timothy 2:12] Those who have believed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ endure through all of life’s difficult times, knowing He saves us and brings us to eternity to reign with Him.

However, those who reject the salvation He offers, are doomed to be disowned by Him and never will enter His Kingdom at all. We will talk about God's final disposition of that false king and those who follow him in a moment. But here, all of heaven rejoiced that God's victory over those unbelievers had finally come.

In the joy of that third "Hallelujah," the angel who was helping John directed him, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, 'These are the true words of God.'" [Revelation 19:9]

John was overcome by this vision of Christ Jesus, the Lord God Almighty, coming finally in His Kingdom to His church. John fell down at the feet of the bearer of this wonderful announcement. But the angel demanded, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus." [Revelation 19:10]

Remember that when the Lord first appeared to John in chapter 1 of Revelation, John fell at His feet. This was recorded in verse 17. "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said, 'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.'" [Revelation 1:17,18]

The first response of John was one of fainting in shock at seeing the glorified Christ. This second bowing down was a voluntary compulsion to worship. But it was misplaced before a "fellow servant", rather than before the Lord God Almighty, which the angel immediately corrected.

When hearing all of heaven thundering in exuberant worship, it is no wonder that John got caught up in doing so himself. But the truth is that only God is worthy of worship. The first of the ten commandments God gave to Moses stated this: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God," [Exodus 20:3-5a]

When Jesus himself discussed worship with the Samaritan woman He said, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." [John 4:23,24]

So, the angel was absolutely correct to forbid John from worshiping himself. Did you notice the phrase in this third Hallelujah that triggered John's response? The angel had said, "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, 'These are the true words of God." [Revelation 19:9b]

Jesus proclaimed before His disciples, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." [John 14:6] Perhaps it was the contrast of Truth compared to all of the deceitfulness of the antichrist under Satan's influence, which John had seen in his visions, that so moved him to fall down in worship before the angel.

Perhaps it was the accumulation of all of these visions that confused John. The angel also reminded him that he must, "Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus." [Revelation 19:10b] All of these visions and prophecies were given to John through the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ Himself. The very testimony which John received was witness that only the Lord Jesus Christ should be worshiped. However, as the angel corrected John's worship, this vision of the Hallelujahs ended.

The Triumph Over the Beast

John's next vision began with a vision of a great battle. "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war." [Revelation 19:11] This is the Lord Jesus Christ returning to earth in His power and glory.

Jesus is further described in verses 12 and 13: "His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God." [Revelation 19:12,13]

In chapter 1 of Revelation, John saw Christ also described similarly. “and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.” [Revelation 1:13,14]

His eyes of blazing fire speak of the Lord’s penetrating vision and of judgment. God told the prophet Samuel, when instructing him to anoint David to be Israel’s next king, that God looks at the heart of men to measure their worth, not on their outward appearance. [1 Samuel 16:7] Hebrews 4:13 tells us, “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” [Hebrews 4:13]

Although mankind is easily deceived by a striking outward demeanor, as exemplified by the world-wide acceptance of the antichrist, our Lord’s eyes see deep into the soul. He is the Faithful and True. He knows our hearts and knows those who believe in Him, by name. But he also easily discerns those who have not believed in His name.

The Lord Jesus Christ now rides out to do battle against the gathered nations who have chosen to follow the beast and the false prophet, using His own sword. Verse 15 described it, “Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.” This sword is also described in Revelation 1:16 as a “sharp double edged-sword.”

Hebrews 4:12 uses this same word-picture to describe Scripture. “The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” So, it is no wonder that it is said, “He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God,” in verse 13. [Revelation 19:13]

It appears from this account of this terrible battle against all of the nations still on the earth, that the Lord God will slay all of the soldiers with the Word of His mouth. I wonder if He will use a single word of judgment or individual words of condemnation for each soldier’s rejection of His salvation. But He is Truth and His Word will win this battle.

Although verse 14 goes on to say that, “The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean,” this war is Christ’s alone. He will judge the nations of the earth that have gathered against Israel Himself, with His own Word of condemnation. His army of heaven are merely witnesses to His justice.

And their destruction is complete. This is the same battle that is described as leaving blood up to the horses’ bridle. This battle is the Lord’s vengeance on the armies of all the nations who believed the lies of the antichrist, the beast and the false prophet.

We know from records of wars, exemplified in the Ukraine, that the disposal of the bodies is a terrible burden of war. But Christ Jesus has ordained the “clean-up” in verses 17 and 18 of this war. “And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ‘Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small.’” [Revelation 19:17,18]

I wondered to myself why this army came on horses, rather than in tanks, helicopters or armored carriers. But I remembered that the earth had been devastated by an earthquake that broke down all mountains and dissolved islands. The devastation of the bowl judgments had left mankind with no safe buildings or cities in which to live. Sea travel has been spoiled. Perhaps their roads and army bases, as well as their equipment, had been destroyed. But John saw the armies on horseback, riding to oppose the city of God.

Verse 13 described the Lord Jesus’ robes as being, “dipped in blood,” and verse 15 described His actions in battle: “He will rule them with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.” [Revelation 19:13, 15]

The winepress in Biblical times consisted of a stone base, with a groove cut into it for a drain. Then, a huge stone was lowered down upon the grapes as they were placed on the base, to crush them and drain all of the juice down through the groove into a container. The harvesters would get grapes splattered on their robes as they worked. Therefore, this analogy is vivid.

This battle will be horrendous, as is any war in our day. But our Lord promised that all who practiced evil would be destroyed. Isaiah 13 is a prophecy about the empire of Babylon's fall. In verse 11 God promised, "I will punish the world for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless." [Isaiah 13:11] God always keeps His promises.

The Lord God Almighty rides into battle with many crowns on His head. (verse 12) The commentator Barnes interpreted this to indicate Christ's universal reign. The fact that Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords has made Satan seethe since his own creation. He has never acquiesced to the Lordship of Christ.

In his pride and lies, the devil has often though history convinced men that they too could usurp the reign of the whole world out of God's hands. Here he has convinced the men labeled the "Beast" and the "false prophet" that they too could rule the world. So, in their pride they have ordered all of the men on the earth from every nation to converge on Jerusalem to once and for all destroy the city of God, blaming Israel for all of the disaster that had been earth's punishment.

But what they don't comprehend is that even this act of brutality against Jerusalem is ordained by God. Prophets had published God's plan ages ago! Zephaniah proclaimed God's word: "I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them – all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger." [Zephaniah 3:8] In gathering the nations against Jerusalem, these evil forces are fulfilling God's plan.

Verses 19-21 go on to describe the battle. "Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh." [Revelation 19:19-21]

Notice that the beast, who was leading the kings of the earth was captured during the battle. The false prophet was also captured at this time. God would not allow these two tools of Satan to either succeed in this battle or to live to rally troops again on the earth. God threw them into the lake of fire for eternity. And by doing so, ended their campaign of deception and destruction on the earth.

The soldiers who had followed these demon dominated leaders were then "killed by the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse." God promised "a man reaps, what he sows." [Galatians 6:7] Therefore, these who "planted" the seeds of hate, pride and lust for power had reaped their own destruction. And the birds of prey were well fed that day.

Now, I can't leave this lecture dangling on such a dark picture. You may have noticed that I have only touched on the mentions of God's names in this chapter. I wanted to save their analysis until the end of this teaching, because they deserve special notice.

Chapter 19 of Revelation refers to God by many different names. During the three Hallelujahs, God is referenced in the following verses:

In verses 1, 4, 5, 9 and 10: the word "God" is used in our English version. In Greek the word "Theos" is used, which in Hebrew would be "Elohim."

Verse 6 uses the name: the "Lord God Almighty". The word "Almighty" is translated from the Hebrew word "Shaddai." In Greek the phrase "ruler of all" is "pantokrator." We may have heard it also translated as the word "omnipotent."

The name "Lord" can be a translation of the Greek word "Kurios" which is printed in most Bibles using a capital L with lower case letters "ord." It means sir or master. American culture would use the word "mister" or "sir." But when the word translated Lord has all capital letters in our English Bibles it is a translation of the name "Yahweh," which would mean "He who is" if it were translated literally into English.

Remember this name for God was given to Moses when he asked God, Who was appearing in the burning bush, what name Moses should use to tell the Israelites in slavery Who had sent him to lead them out of Egypt. God answered him, "I AM Who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites. I AM

has sent me to you.” [Exodus 3:14] And so to Israel, “Yahweh,” later transliterated to be “Jehovah,” was the special and holy name for their God.

In chapter 19 of Revelation, verse 9, the Bridegroom’s name is the “Lamb.” This word in Greek is “arniom,” meaning little lamb. This is the name God has chosen to represent His sacrifice for sins. He is the Lamb who was slain. He is the Bridegroom who has purchased the church as His bride by the price of His own blood. We are redeemed at a great price.

Verse 10 referred to Him as Jesus, His earthly name. In Matthew 1:21, the angel affirmed the virgin birth that Mary would accomplish by telling Joseph, “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” So, Jesus means savior. It is the testimony of our faith in our Savior that unifies all believers as servants of Jesus.

Verse 10 recorded the concept of the trinity as well. It speaks of Jesus, God/Elohim and the Spirit. The Greek word for the Spirit is “pneuma” which would literally be translated into English as “breath.” The Spirit is the very breath of God.

In verse 11, God is named “The Faithful and True.” Faithful is translated from the Greek word “pistos,” which means steady. True is from the Greek word “alethmos,” which would be translated to mean “sincere, real, or veracious.” Throughout Scripture God is often named by His attributes, such as in Genesis 16:13, where Hagar calls Him, “You are the God who sees me...” Therefore, He is here called the Faithful and True.

In verse 13 God is called the “Word.” The Greek word used here is “logos,” which literally means “speech, or reason.” In the first verse of his gospel, John introduced Jesus: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” [John 1:1] Since we have discussed God’s use of His Word to wield judgment, it made the use of this name of God fully appropriate.

As God rode into this battle, it is stated in verse 16 that, “On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” As our Lord God establishes His Kingdom, He uses this name showing His absolute sovereignty and right to reign over all of the earth.

But God can’t be defined by only one name. Verse 12 spoke of another name. “He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.” Matthew recorded Jesus’ words to His disciples, saying, “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” [Matthew 11:27]

Although God has revealed Himself through many names to many people in the Bible, there is still a name no one knows. Our God is so magnificent, so great, so beyond our understanding that it will take an eternity to get to know Him, and we will still be surprised by Him.

Peter, in his sermon before the Sanhedrin, proclaimed, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” [Acts 4:12] We may know Him best by the name Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer. But one day we will be with Him as His bride. Then our privilege for all of eternity will be to get to know Him, more and more – and yet we will never know Him totally.

As a bride only actually gets to know her groom in the many years after the wedding, so we, as the bride of Christ, will be able to spend time with Him, walk and work with Him and get to know Him in eternity. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah to the King of kings and Lord of lords!