

Intro. When you think of all the great causes of celebration in life, you may think of your team winning a sports contest or getting that big job promotion or better yet, you remember giving birth to your children. Moreover, if you’ve had a good marriage, you certainly recall your wedding day & all the planning & joy & celebration that day brought as you invited family & friends near & far to come rejoice with you. As we pick up our study of Revelation 19, the scene shifts from the darkest days of the Great Tribulation to heaven & there we see “Heaven’s Celebration,” beginning with “The Marriage Supper of the Lamb.”

Theme: Worship

Background: Toward the end of the first-century, after all the other apostles had been martyred for their faith, the Apostle John was exiled on the island of Patmos for his faith in Christ. While worshipping the Lord, Christ gave him this revelation as a series of visions, most of which concerned the end times.

- In these 10 verses, the word “worship” occurs 3x (19:4, 10 [2x]), “hallelujah” occurs 4x (meaning “Praise Yahweh,” 19:1, 3-4, 6) & “praise” occurs once (19:5), as do the terms “rejoice” (19:7), “exult” (19:7) & “give Him glory” (referring to worship, 19:7)
- Thus, there are at least 11 references to worshipping or praising the Lord in this passage—that shouldn’t surprise us, because we have read chapter after chapter of all the wickedness & evil done through the Antichrist & false prophet & prostitute during the dark days of the Great Tribulation & now we are coming to the end when God has had enough & He is bringing it all to an end in judgment & salvation & all of heaven is crying out in loud celebration

➤ In light of this understanding, let’s look at 3 reasons to worship & praise the Lord & 1 focus:

1. **Worship & Praise the Lord for His Righteous Judgments (19:1-3)**

- As soon as the scene shifts to heaven, John hears shouts of praise!
- The great multitude probably represents the redeemed from all over the world & throughout all the ages

Illus: This emphasis on worship is what caused the Reformers during the 17th-century to write in various catechisms & confessions, “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God & enjoy Him forever”

- “hallelujah”—occurs only 24x in the Psalms (Pss 113-118; 146-150) & 4x in Revelation 19

Illus: Remember the song “Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah, Praise Ye the Lord”?

- While the song begins with “salvation & glory & power,” the first element underscored is God’s true & just judgments—He’s never wrong
- The great prostitute, probably representing false religion & world economy, both of which will target Christians, will be destroyed
- The “smoke” going up “forever & ever” speaks to eternal torment for unbelievers in hell, described again later in this chapter (19:20) & the next (20:10, 14-15)

2. **Worship & Praise the Lord for His Gracious Salvation (19:1, 4-5)**

- The 24 elders probably represent the 12 tribes of Israel & the 12 apostles—both the old & new covenant people of God
- The 4 living creatures probably represent a special class of spiritual beings created to worship God—similar to seraphim & cherubim
- Both of these groups join the multitude in worship & praise to God for His saving work—those who “fear” God give Him reverence & render praise, for He has saved small groups & great groups of people (or lowly servants & wealthy servants—small & great in the world’s eyes)

Illus: It does us some good to stop & think about God’s gracious salvation of us, doesn’t it? Sometimes we get apathetic toward the Christian life & what God has called us to do, but I have always found

going back to the beginning, when I got saved, to be a great motivator to serving the Lord—all that He did for me means I can't help but rejoice & serve Him!

3. Worship & Praise the Lord for His Glorious Sovereignty (19:6-9)

- “Lord God Almighty”—occurs 7x in Revelation & stresses His sovereignty over all—even when it appears Satan & Antichrist are in control, God is over all
- This vision given to John shows him & us, the readers, that God has been in control of these things all along & he points to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb as proof

Illus: When John mentions the “Marriage Supper of the Lamb,” he has the Hebrew understanding in mind. Two families would come together & agree upon an arranged wedding with a specific price. This was called a betrothal & was stronger than our engagements, because they were promised to each other & the only way to break it was through divorce. Yet the couple didn't live together but there was a period of time between the betrothal & the wedding. Once the sum was paid for the dowry (the agreed upon price), the actual wedding followed & the bridegroom would be accompanied by his friends to the bride's home & take her from her home to his home, where there would be a great wedding feast & a weeklong celebration

- The prophets (Isaiah 54:5-6; 62:5; Jeremiah 3:20; Hosea 2:19) & apostles (2 Corinthians 11:2; John 3:29) describe the relationship between God's people, the Church & Christ this way

Illus: In Christ the bride was chosen from eternity. Throughout the entire OT dispensation the wedding was announced. Next, the Son of God assumed our flesh & blood: the betrothal took place. The price—the dowry—was paid on Calvary. And now, after an interval which in the eyes of God is but a little while, the Bridegroom returns & “It has come, the wedding of the Lamb” (Hendricksen, *More Than Conquerors*, 181)

- It was granted to the bride to clothe herself & Christ has given the clothes for a right standing with God to the Church & she has had the responsibility to live for the Lord in that relationship (19:8)
- The blessing is for those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb—only believers will be invited to this (like the hymn, “When We All Get to Heaven” is a song for believers only)—this is different than the great invitation Christ gives to the world to come to Him & drink & live (John 87:37-38), for this invitation only goes to the Church

4. Worship & Praise the Lord Alone (19:10)

- John was overtaken by this vision of celebration & consummation of the Lord's salvation of His people that he fell down & began to worship the angel, but the angel immediately stopped him & told him he was not worthy of worship & only God is
- Not only are angels not worthy of worship as created beings, but neither are demons or Satan, for they are fallen angels
- Other manmade gods are not worthy of worship, because they are not the true God & they do not have any power
- Anything we idolize & put in the place of God is not worthy of worship—what we center our lives around—whether they be a spouse or children or grandchildren or money or work or fame or sports or video games or technological gadgets or anything else

Illus: Jehovah's Witnesses try to say this verse teaches Christ isn't to be worshiped, but only God—yet Christ is a member of the Triune God & we see Him worshiped in chapter 5 in the exact same way God the Father is worshiped in chapter 4. Moreover, Thomas called Jesus “My Lord & my God” (John 20:28) & Jesus never stopped him from worshiping Him, because Jesus Christ is God

Conc. Have you ever been cheering for your team only to find them down & facing impossible odds of winning, but just before time ran out, they scored & won the game? Do you remember how crazy it was & how excited you got? That will pale in comparison to the celebration in heaven when God judges the enemy & redeems His people. To get an invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, you have to surrender your life to Christ through repentance & faith. Will you do so today?