

Revelation 19, 1-10 “A Wedding in Heaven”

10.3.18

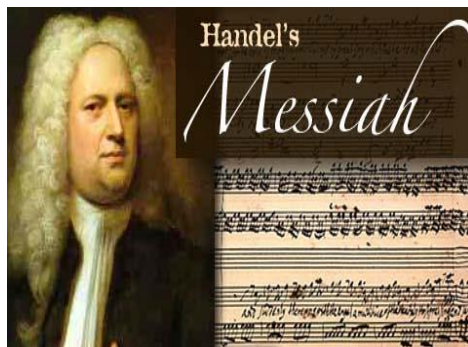
The book of the Revelation has been described by some as the Tale of Two Cities...Babylon, the kingdom of the Antichrist and the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city of Jesus Christ. I would go one step further and call the Book of the Revelation a “Tale of Two Women,” the prostitute of Babylon and the Bride of Christ. The two come together in Revelation 19. Their future destinies could not be more radically different. Choosing which one you love and belong to will settle your eternal destiny.

As we will see in a moment, when we read the first 10 verses of Rev. 19, the word: “Hallelujah” will appear four times in verses 1, 3, 4 and 6. You might not know this...but the word appears nowhere else in the New Testament. I found that amazing...but true! But, that single word, I believe: Hallelujah captures the heart of the entire book of Revelation. Because finally, finally, finally, the revealing of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords...and the ultimate marriage with the Bride...the Church...US...the saved...born again...will finally come to fruition!! Hallelujah!!!

Revelation 19:1-10

¹ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” ³ Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.” ⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” ⁵ And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.” ⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” ¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

In 1741, this man...



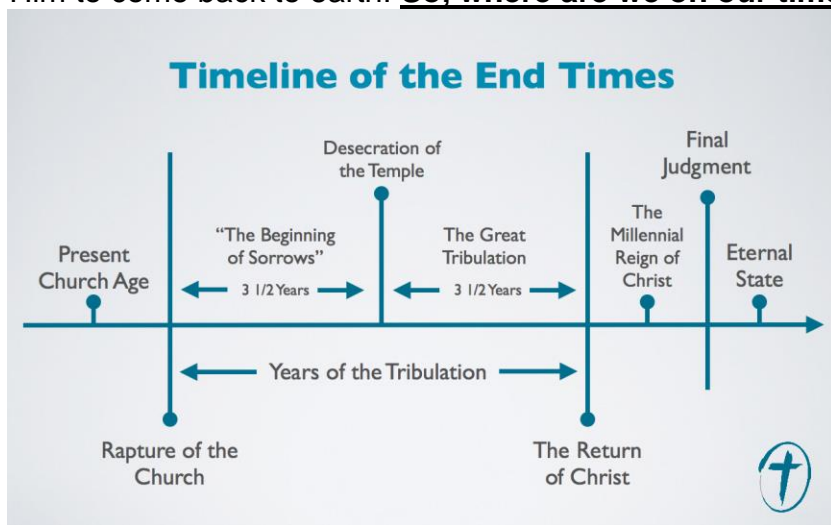
George Frideric Handel wrote “Messiah,” the most famous oration of which is the “Hallelujah Chorus.” We think of it most often around the Christmas season. Years ago, when Lesley Speas was our choir director, our choir actually performed it one Christmas. It’s an amazing piece of music. Interestingly, it a tradition in some parts of the world that when it begins, the audience or congregation stands and remains standing until its completion.

The reason I bring this up is because in heaven, I believe we will respond differently when we see the Messiah, Jesus Christ. I don't believe we'll stand...in fact, as we studied in Revelation chapter 4, we will fall down before Him and cast our crowns before the throne! But, here in Revelation 19, there will be worship and praise offered for a different reason. The vile prostitute of false religion will have been destroyed and a wedding is about to happen! In fact heaven's Hallelujah Chorus is in response to the command we saw in Revelation 18:20. Look back there in your Bibles...

Revelation 18:20

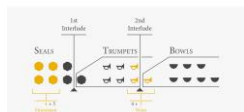
Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"

Heaven rejoices over the fact that the world will finally be rid of false religion and the coming of Jesus will show the world that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Now the words of Jesus' model prayer are going to come true: *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!* It's time for Him to come back to earth! **So, where are we on our timeline?**



We are coming to the end of the Tribulation Period and the Return of Jesus to this earth to set up His 1,000 Millennial Reign. That Reign will be a type of honeymoon for the Bride, us...the Church as we celebrate with Jesus on this earth as He keeps His covenant promise to the nation of Israel and rules and reigns from the throne of David in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem.

Listen, we've seen a lot of bad news in the last several chapters...the Apocalypse is bringing catastrophe to the earth... Remember...we've seen a triplicate of judgments...three (3) sets of judgments...



Seals, trumpets and bowls. It's been really bad!!! But, finally, finally, finally...we can rejoice! Relief! It's over! The wedding is going to take place! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!!

Look at verse 1...all of heaven is crying out: "Hallelujah!"

Revelation 19:1-2

¹ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ² for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

The word: "Hallelujah" means, "Praise Yahweh or Praise the Lord." All of heaven is rejoicing in the fact that justice has been served! During the Tribulation period, Satan, the Antichrist and all those who have rejected Jesus are getting their due. God's judgments are TRUE AND JUST (vs. 2). Listen, we've said this over and over, God can no more turn a deaf ear to sin, evil and injustice than a good judge can allow someone to get away with breaking the law. Sin mocks God...righteousness honors Him and here God is praised in Heaven for administering justice toward those who have rejected His Son. And so, we've seen that throughout the Tribulation period with the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments. And now there is praise because finally, finally, finally, justice has been served!! Heaven rejoices!!! See the 2nd and 3rd Hallelujahs in verses 3 & 4.

Revelation 19:3-4

³ Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." ⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

Remember, the 24 Elders represent the saints of the OT and the NT, and the four living creatures are angels and they are all worshiping God and saying, "Amen (So be it...we agree!), Hallelujah!" What we see is: All of heaven is rejoicing...that's SAINTS and ANGELS rejoicing together!

Revelation 19:5-6

⁵ And from the throne came a voice saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great." ⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns."

Oh this is so fantastic!! Everyone "small and great" praise His name! Everyone is worshiping...and it's like a deafening thunder of roaring waters like the sound of Niagara Falls. Do you see this...the worship of God in heaven is absolutely more powerful than anything you've ever heard in an arena or in any instance of your life.

Worship...oh, it's a beautiful thing to know that we're all part of the family of God... from those who clean toilets to those who are CEO's of plumbing companies...in heaven...we're all the same...and you know what...when we come in here it's the same, right? We're all brothers and sisters...it doesn't matter what we do. We're all the same...we're the body of Christ...the Bride of Christ.

I love how John Piper describes this...

"Corporate worship...is the declaration in the midst of Babylon that we will not be drawn into her harlotries, because we have found in God the satisfaction of our souls. In his presence is fullness of joy and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore. Corporate worship is the public savoring of the *worth* of God and the *beauty* of God and the *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, *Worship God*

Listen, the previous *hallelujahs* pointed back to the destruction of Babylon, but **now the *hallelujahs* point to the fact that the reign of God has begun** and the anticipation of the coming

wedding of the His Son...the Lamb of God and the Bride.

Revelation 19:7

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

I remember this picture like it was yesterday... Pam and I were dating...



(Didn't we look so young!) And then I popped the question and she said, "Yes." And we began to prepare for the wedding: December 22, 1990. I thought it would never get here and in some way...it's got to be how Jesus feels about waiting to have the wedding in heaven and be with all of us...His Bride...

Well, the wedding day came and Pam was getting ready...



How crazy is it...that that picture was taken right outside of what is now my office. That's surreal! Doesn't she look wonderful, as all brides do...Do you remember your wedding? The anticipation of the ceremony...and it finally came...and we were married...right over there in the Prayer Chapel...



What a day! After all the waiting and anticipation...Pastor Rick Speas said, "I now pronounce you husband and wife" and it was done! And so we moved to the fellowship hall for the reception...and there we were cutting the cake...



What a joyous reception! And yet, as wonderful as that wedding and reception was for me...it's nothing compared to the wedding in heaven and what that Grand Reception that we'll participate in afterwards!

Now, in order to understand the nuances of this passage, I want to remind us of how weddings worked in the first century in a Jewish culture. There were four (4) phrases of a Hebrew wedding:

Four Phrases of Hebrew Wedding:

#1 Betrothal

#2 The Processional

#3 Wedding Ceremony

#4 Wedding Supper

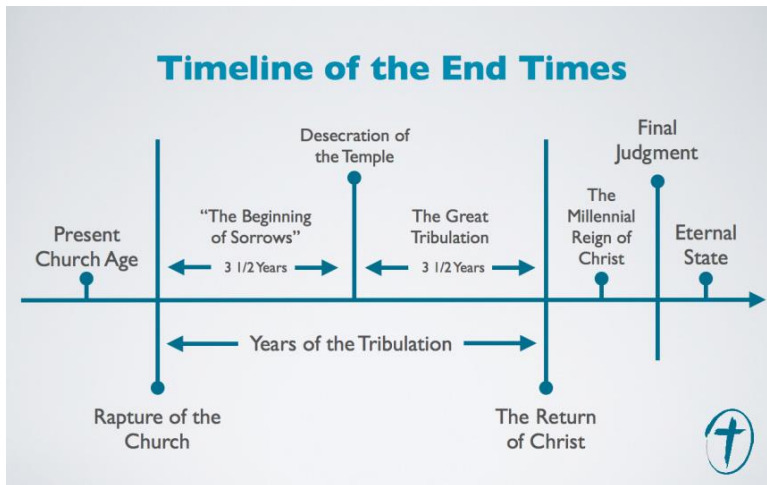
The **betrothal** or engagement is not like our engagements today...which are now broken with a tweet on Twitter. No...a betrothal in Biblical times was a binding contract that could only be ended with a certificate of divorce. (Remember Joseph and Mary...when she was found to be pregnant, everyone knew Joseph could of have divorced her and broken the betrothal...but, of course, he didn't.) He trusted and believed Mary that God's Son would be born of her...a virgin.

You see, we are betrothed to Jesus (as the Bride, the Church) right now. You see, during the betrothal, the groom goes away to prepare a place for the bride... You know John 14:2-3.

John 14:2-3

²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Jesus has gone to heaven and He's preparing that place for us in the Father's house. That's what a groom does. He gets the home ready for the bride. Well, when the house was ready, the **processional** would begin. The groom, along with the bridal party, would go to the bride's house and get her and then take her back to the house he had prepared for her. Do you see...we're just waiting for Jesus to come back to get us (The Rapture of the Church) and take us to the Father's house that He has prepared for us! Then the **wedding** takes place followed by the GRAND RECEPTION...the wedding supper! See our timeline again...



Now let me try to explain when the wedding will take place. Scholars are split on the timing. Some say the Wedding is going to take place in heaven after the Rapture, when (in heaven) we receive our rewards at the Bema Judgment Seat of Christ, while the Tribulation is taking place on the earth. Others say the wedding actually takes place at the beginning of the Millennial Reign and that the reception lasts throughout the 1,000 Millennial Reign.

Well, I'm not dogmatic about it one way or the other, but I tend to lean to the wedding happening in heaven, because it seems from the text that it's happening in heaven. But, the truth is...it really doesn't matter to me WHEN it happens...just THAT it happens!!! Amen! What a joy this is going to be! **See verse 7 again...watch the flow now...as the bride makes herself ready.**

Revelation 19:7-8

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The Bride has made herself ready... Remember this picture...



Pam didn't put on sackcloth and ashes...she didn't part on work clothes or shorts and t-shirt. She made herself ready. She was beautiful. She was clothed in fine linen, bright and beautiful...there was great care to keep the dress pretty and clean and spotless.

Do you get the metaphor? We're not talking about clothing...we're talking about our righteous deeds. Never forget God wants us to live in righteousness...holiness and purity... **Please turn to 1 Thessalonians 4.** This is so critical in our day and age of promiscuity and "anything goes" attitude.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

¹ Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Church, we're to walk in holiness...that's why Jesus died...He died for our sins...so that we might be overcomers...not men and women who justify our sin.

Well, let's back to the wedding and the supper to follow...and some invited guests...

Revelation 19:9

⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Now first let me say this about those invited to the wedding. This isn't the bride...it can't be the bride...after all...she's can't be invited to the wedding because she's IN the wedding...we're the church...the Bride...so we're not the invited guests... So who are they? Let me share with you a quote from John MacArthur that I believe helps explain this very succinctly...

"The invited guests are those saved before Pentecost, all the faithful believers saved by grace through faith up to the birth of the church (Acts 2). Though they are not the bride, they are still glorified and reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom... The guests also will include Tribulation saints and believers alive in earthly bodies in the Millennial kingdom." John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary*

What a joy!!! Imagine being with Jesus... What will you do when you see Jesus? Worship!

Revelation 19:10

¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

John was overwhelmed by the grandeur of this vision. He collapsed before the angel...but, the angel said, "No! **WORSHIP GOD!**"

Worship! Isn't that what the entire book of Revelation is about? That's the point of the Revelation...once Jesus is revealed...every knee will eventually bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord... Every person who has ever lived will offer Jesus worship...even those who have rejected Him.

Do you understand...all of this **life** and the next is about glorifying God! No, as believers in Christ...we don't worship Babylon...we don't worship the stuff of this world...we don't worship Satan's counterfeits...we are to worship God!

I close with this quote from Piper...

“The church is an alien outpost in Babylon. And we exist to reassert God’s rightful place wherever it has been prostituted to secular commerce or secular education or secular entertainment or secular media or secular arts or secular sports. All the people of God, exiled in Babylon are called to be filled with the Spirit of Jesus as Lord of the universe and that means Lord over every area of secular life while living in Babylon.

But as an alien outpost in Babylon we know what’s coming. And we know what the worship of heaven is going to be like when Babylon comes down, and God stands forth to vindicate his Son. We know we exist to WORSHIP GOD. Yes, God let’s John hear the celebration of heaven so that in his exile and in his suffering he might join in and worship God. And John wrote it down in a book so that we might listen to the worship of heaven and join in! **WORSHIP GOD!”** John Piper, *Worship God*

A wedding is coming! I can’t wait...And the supper to follow is going to be unlike any feast you’ve ever seen! I guess, I’ll say: Hallelujah!!!!