
Into Thy Word Bible Study in Revelation

Revelation 19:1-10: “Praise from Heaven”

General idea: God has punished the great harlot, judged the corruptions of the earth, and avenged His faithful. Now, John hears a vast, resounding *Amen* and *Hallelujah!* Shouts of praise and thanksgiving, all coming from Heaven, were echoing from all those who surrounded him in his heavenly vision in the very Temple of God. The elders, who were all there, fell prostrate before God as they sang His praise. John hears that salvation is from God and His power, judgments, and purposes are just and pure. He is a God who is real and trustworthy, who carries out His promises and holy plan. Then, another voice comes out saying *praise our God*—a call for all to say, for all to know and fear Him. Then, a shout comes out like a roar from a large crowd, also saying *Hallelujah, let us be glad and rejoice in Him!* The time of sorrow is over; now is the wedding feast of the Lamb that we as the faithful can partake in as God rewards us for our good deeds and faithfulness. Then, the angel tells John to write this down: *blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.* These words come from God! Then, John is overwhelmed and starts to worship the angel, but is rebuked; the angel says *do not worship me; worship Jesus, His Majesty and Presence, and testify your faith to Him so others can know Him too.* Then, he falls down prostrate before God in fear and awe of his majesty and presence.

Vs. 1-10, Contexts: This passage is about the marriage of the Lamb to the Church, His dowry being the pain and suffering that He endured on the cross, something that no one else could pay. Jesus is giving the call to the Bride, His Church, to be pure and faithful and to rejoice in Him. This passage is also a contrast of good and evil, the triumph of Christ and the defeat of Satan; the glorification of the True Church and the defeat of a false church. This is also about how good character, faithfulness, and Fruit will win out over evil, even when all seems bleak and dark. This is a celebration of the Majesty, Presence, and Goodness of God. As the themes of the past few chapters have focused on evil, sin, its judgments, and those who miss it and their mourning, now it is about celebration! Those who were faithful while living and were martyred rejoice in God's faithfulness and their vindication. Sin has been judged and God is glorified; He rewards those who are true to Him. It is a testimony that godless systems, sin, and iniquity against God and the faithful will not work long or well. Evil is judged and condemned while true spirituality in Christ is eternally rewarded and beneficial. This is also about our own vindication, and all the benefits we have when we are in Christ. We are a part of His Kingdom that is being showcased in this passage, so we who are in Christ can sing a loud and clear *Hallelujah!*

Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Great multitude* (Rev. 7:9). A common Jewish use of expression. Some have suggested these are the martyrs from chapter six or the expression, “all will praise Him” (Gen. 41:25-27; Rev. 5:9; 6:11; 7:1-8; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6. 17:15).

- *Hallelujah/Alleluia/Praise the LORD* means more than just “honor;” it is a call to worship. As a church is the representation of Heaven on earth, this is a command to worship God in His court. It is the only place in Scripture this word is found, although its Hebrew equivalent rendered as “alleluia” (Greek rendering), “Praise the Lord,” or “Praise ye the LORD,” (Praise Yahweh) are found in the Psalms, chapters 104-106, 111-113, 117, 135, 146-150, and many more. This is a Liturgical expletive a priest uses called a “piel,” as in a command to call the people to praise and worship Yahweh (Jer 51:48; Psalm 104:34).
- *Avenged/vindication on her the blood* refers that evil gets its just reward and punishment, and those who are faithful are vindicated (Deut. 32:43; Psalm 79:10; Jer. 51:48-49).
- *Smoke from her goes up* means God makes war on evil. This is a reference to the fall of Edom in Isaiah, meaning that wickedness and worldliness will fall and be judged (Is. 34:10; 66:24).
- *Just are his judgments.* God never acts with bad intentions or out of anger or spite, but He does pay back evil and justly judges with the whole council of real, effectual truth, as well as all of His characters of grace and mercy. Evil will be judged and it must pay God for what it took for God and those who are faithful! If there is genuine repentance, then Christ Himself paid that debt on the cross (Rev. 15:3-4; 16:5-7)!
- *The twenty-four elders.* This is a reference that this celebration is before all for His all. Those with authority, in the context of a church, are God’s representatives called to declare and serve Him wholeheartedly and righteously just as we are called to lead and manage a church. God is above all and the only One worthy to receive praise, as all that is considered mighty and wondrous in the ancient world is depicted as praising God (Heb. 12:22-24; see Rev. 4:4-6).
- *Amen.* This means “so be it for ever and ever.” It is also a call for us to learn to surrender to Him and be trusting and obedient to Him, because nothing can stand against Him (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; Isa. 60:1-5; Psalm 37:7, 20, 24; Rev. 7:9-17; 10:11; 12:5; 13:7; 14:6-8; 15:4; 17:15; 18:3; 19:15; 20:3; 21:24-27).
- *Fear him.* “Fear” means awe and reverence of God, not being scared of Him (Prov. 1:7; 3:5).
- *Sounded like a great multitude...roar...waters* means worship music to honor God and/or the music in a wedding celebrating the joining of two families (Jer. 25:30-32).
- *Lord God Almighty/Omnipotent* means that Christ is all supreme, all powerful and strong, all mighty, and the ruler of all things. Refers to the supremacy and power of Christ, as He is “Omnipotent,” ultimate, and our Deliverer, and nothing in the universe compares to Him; it is our duty to reverence and worship Him. There is no

stronger language to show Christ's Divinity and Supremacy (Ex. 15:18; Job 37:5-6; Psalm 97:1; Is. 24:23; 52:7; Ezek. 1:24; 43:2; Dan. 10:6; Micah 4:7; 2 Cor. 6:18; Col. 1:17; Rev. 16:7).

- *Wedding/marriage of the Lamb.* This was an image of our Redeemer's intimacy and the community between God and His children. This is beyond a metaphor as it is about the life, love, and joy that a first century marriage celebration represented that Christ shares with us and calls us to share with one another in our covenant of Grace. This is also a contrast to the divorce of the harlot (Ex. 22:16; Is. 54:5-7; Hos. 2:19-20; Matt. 9:15; 22:2; John 2:1-3; 3:29; 22:2-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Heb. 2:5; 6:5; 1 John 1:3-10).
- *Let us rejoice and be glad.* This too is an expression of honor, glory, and gratitude to God for who He is and what He has done. It expresses our praise and honor for His glory. In Christ, we are like a bride married to a groom, as Israel was a bride of God. This is a celebration of our salvation in Him (Matt. 5:12; Rev. 21:2).
- *Fine/pure linen* means righteousness and purity. Referred to priests and their clothing as representing God's holiness and purity. These angels represented God's glory (Lev. 16:4; Prov. 15:33, 18:12; Dan. 12:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:5).
- *Blessed are those who are invited.* This is the fourth "beatitude" in Matthew, and it refers to those who are faithful in Christ. In Him, we will receive the *good will* of God as blessings from Christ; those who reject Him will be judged. Being blessed also refers to the emotional states of satisfaction, well-being, and contentment that result from being approved by God and by the fulfilling of our duty. It is enjoying God's special favor and His Grace working in us. It is like being told by our parents that they are proud of us (Matt. 5:1-12; Rev. 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7-14). There are also seven *beatitudes* in Revelation (Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).
- *Wedding/marriage supper* means a Jewish wedding where the marriage is consummated and celebrated with family and friends. This is a promise of deliverance and reward for being faithful as Christ takes the Church as His bride, and the dowry, which He paid on the cross. This is also an expression of God's intimacy and agency with us, but also a contrast between the horror of evil and the joys of goodness. Our salvation is compared to a banquet, a most high privilege and honor in the ancient world. In Him we are cleansed, saved, and redeemed. We belong to Him; thus, our church, His Church, must be sanctified to Him. Some misguided people see these as two different gatherings—the marriage of the Lamb and the feast; one is for the Jews and the other for Christians. This is a false *dichotomy* ("exegetical fallacy") and greatly misses the point that there is no race segregation in Christ—only those who know Him and those who do not (Is. 25:6-9; Matt. 22:2, 26-29; 2 Cor. 11:2-3; Eph. 5:26; Col. 1:22; 1 Thess. 5:15-24; 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 John 3:3; Rev. 7:17).

- *Fell at his feet to worship him.* Meaning that worship is an essential component of communion and community; we communicate our love, adoration, and gratitude to Christ, doing it together as a church locally, as a Church universally, and with all of creation “in concert.”
- *Do not do it.* John is perhaps overwhelmed by the glory and all that is seen and said, stimulating him to instinctually worship the angel; thus the angel rebukes his error. Many pagans at that time worshiped angels and created beings. It is Christ alone whom we worship—the Godhead Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—One God, and the only One whom we are to worship (Col. 2:18).
- *Testimony of Jesus.* Jesus is the Witness to the Church universal and the angel speaking to John is bearing the very words of Christ to him; then, John becomes the witness of Christ to not only to his churches but also to us today through the written Word. A proper witness to Christ will be identified by the distinction between good and false teaching and/or good versus bad love, Fruit and character and/or a good or a failing church (Matt. 22:1-14; 25:1-13; 1 John 4:1-6; Rev. 1: 2; 2:20; 6:9; 22:9).

Thoughts and Applications:

Our authentic vindication is that we have received our justification in Christ. It is sealed and is more valuable than we will ever know; evil has no vindication and will have no acquittal. When we are faithful, no matter what we have experienced or been through, He is with us, and He, Jesus Himself, will give us vindication. Then, the question we are to seek is *how then do I live my Christian life? As a response to whom He is and what He has done, or rather, as I see fit?* In context, this is also about bringing the Truth of Christ to our churches and using them to bring His Truth to the world. Thus, the church must remain in Him and see His Supremacy, not our feeble ideas and agendas that are contrary to His Word and call. This also means we are not to allow ourselves to bow to compliancy, idolatry, or apostasy!

This passage is a proclamation not just to know and trust God, but to praise Him with a praise that anticipates His goodness and realizes His faithfulness, because we are already victorious in Christ. This *marriage* supper is about our faith in, relationship with, and commitment to Christ; it is our response to Him from our gratitude and to declare to one another, His Church, to be prepared in knowledge and faith in Him, and to live our lives worthy for Him. Thus, this passage is also about discipleship; we learn of Him so to be in Him, and live worthy with our redemption that we have received (Eph. 5:25-27).

The Four Prevailing Views

The Preterist view: This camp is split as to whether it refers to Jerusalem or to Rome. Most see this as a declaration of praise for His faithful delivery, the omnipotent reign of God, and for the Church to get ready for Christ’s return, being prepared by faith in Him. This is demonstrated by the prostration of the *twenty-four elders* and the *Hallelujahs*,

Praise the Lord, and roar. The *marriage of the Lamb* is seen as a declaration of the new covenant or epoch of grace in which we live as Christians. This is also a contrast or correlative to the divorce of the harlot and the fulfillment of His promise to be faithful. This also is seen as a declaration to the Church to prepare its people for its nuptials (discipleship), and to live worthy with the redemption that we have received.

The Futurist view: Most in this camp see this passage as a call of God to rejoice in the fall of the beast and Babylon! The *marriage of the Lamb* is seen as Israel being reunited to Christ and God's relationship with the Jews restored and brought into the Christian Church. Others see this as figurative, solely the Church and its union with Christ. Most see this happening right after the rapture and the end of the tribulation, while others see this as the Church being friends of the Bridegroom from John 3:29. Some see this as the unsaved people, after the rapture, being offered salvation or the saints of all the church age past, present, and future. Some see the *marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper* as two distinct feasts, ignoring Jewish wedding traditions and word meanings, saying one group is for the Jews and the other for Christians. Some go so far as to say the bridegroom is not Christ and the guests are not the Church, ignoring the rest of the counsel of Scripture. *Testimony of Jesus* is seen as the whole council of God, His Word and Spirit to the Church, and/or the call for the Church to be a good witness. Others take this as finding the key to Revelation, not from the proper understanding of Scripture, but from subjective analysis, from personal whims, and from sensational insights, while others who read the Bible see this as the redemptive work of Christ for the Church.

The Idealist view: They see this passage as the end of human time when Christ is about ready to return. The *marriage of the Lamb* is seen as the day of doom for the beast and its followers while the faithful are rewarded. The marriage is consummated as Christ takes the Church as His bride. The cost of the dowry was paid by Christ on the cross. The wedding guests are not only the people invited, they are also His bride, and the individual guests are collectively His Church. *Fine linen* is seen as the wedding clothes worn by the bride and groom, representing Christ and His purity and the call of purity and faithfulness to His Church. *Testimony of Jesus* is seen as a call to Christian leaders (prophets) to take the Word of God and the Spirit and put it in their mouths to be proclaimed to their church.

The Historicist view: They see this passage as a celebration of the fall of the papal system and the rise of the Reformed Church out of the Reformation (true believers in Christ). *Halleluiah* is also the celebration of the faithful Jews for being included in the Kingdom (because of the use of the Hebrew word *Halleluiah* instead of one of the many Greek equivalents). The *marriage of the Lamb* is seen as the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ, or the reign of the true reformed Church of Christ. Others see this as those in Christ receiving their salvation and rewards. The rejoicing is the growth of the Church, its adherence to the Bible and the fading of the oppression and manipulations of the Catholic Church. *Do not do it* given to John is seen as a reminder not to fall back into apostasy or manipulation as a church or Church universal. As a Church, we are the

bride of Christ called to proclaim Him, not to worship what is false, traditions, saints, Mary, popes, angels, relics, and/or indulgences.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What do you do when your favorite sports team wins the championship, when an actor receives a reward, or when your child becomes an honor student or on the Deans list?
2. How do you feel when Christians shout out praise and thanksgivings? Does it make you feel uncomfortable? If so why or why not? Some Christian groups are self-conscious about being emotional with their faith. How can this be a problem? How can being overly emotional be a problem too?
3. How should a church celebrate significant events and people? What does gratitude to God for who He is and what He has done have to do with worship and praise?
4. What are you grateful to God for? What happens when Christians forget to be grateful? How does ingratitude affect the church and call that Christ gives us?
5. How can a person be motivated to do good, knowing that evil will be judged and that it must pay God for what it took? How do you feel as a Christian that when you genuinely repent, Christ Himself has already paid that debt on the cross?
6. What can motivate you more to serve Christ wholeheartedly and righteously? What about how you would lead and manage a church?
7. How can the fact that Christ is all supreme, all powerful and strong, all mighty, and the ruler of all things help you move from leading by personal agendas to leading with His precepts, character, Fruit, and call?

8. In Christ we have immeasurable intimacy and community with God as His child. How can that motivate you to live with your eyes more on Him and less on your circumstances? How can this affect your complacency and fears in serving Him?
9. How do you feel that our salvation is compared to a banquet, a most high privilege and honor? Do you think your salvation is an honor? How so? What are you going to do with that information in your daily walk?
10. Do you know that your justification in Christ is sealed and more valuable than you will ever know? How does this affect your righteousness and purity?
11. How can your church do a better job at seeing and applying His Supremacy rather than feeble ideas and agendas that are contrary to His Word and call?
12. What can you as a church do to prevent yourselves from bowing to complacency, idolatry, or apostasy?

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