

corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And a second time they say, Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying Amen; Hallelujah. 5 And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. 7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

#### Initial Questions 19:1-8

1. What does Hallelujah mean in vs. 1?
2. Discuss how the truth, justice, and righteousness are related in God's judgment of the great harlot - vs. 2.
3. Discuss the spiritual implications of the imagery of "the harlot" in vs. 2.
4. What does the Bible mean when it speaks of fearing God - vs. 5?
5. What is the significance of the assertion in vs. 6 - that "the almighty reigneth"? (Reigneth is the translation of a form which means - keeps on reigning or continually reigns.)
6. Is God really reigning in the above sense in view of the rapid development of the forces of evil in our own day?
7. Who is the wife of the Lamb in vs. 7?
8. Discuss the difference in the dress of the great harlot (17:4) and the wife of the Lamb - vs. 8.

#### Triumph in Heaven; Two Hallelujah Psalms; An Angelic Message Chapter 19:1-10

A great shout of joy is heard in heaven because of the overthrow of the great Harlot. These shouts of jubilation also introduce the great scenes of final victory. The heavenly songs are modeled after their O.T. counterparts.

We have passed through the great woes and have seen the ravishing effects of evil upon both the spiritual and physical

creation. Now, we enter the great section of Hope! This hope is grounded in God's victory through Christ. Our Christian hope stands in radical contrast with the contemporary nihilistic attitudes. In the prevision of hope we see the tension between cynicism and the Christian faith, defeatism and hope.

*Verse 1*

What was the message of the heavenly chorus? "Hallelujah (from two Hebrew words meaning - praise Yahweh - see the note after chapter 19 on *Handel's Messiah*). Read Psalm 70; Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6. The great *Hallel* is the technical title for Psalms 104-109. They were sung primarily at the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles.) The salvation (the Emperor cult claimed that Caesar was the only savior of men), and the glory, and power of our God." The chorus was claiming that salvation, glory, and power belong to almighty God, and not to the great harlot. Why do these characteristics belong to God—only?

*Verse 2*

"Because true and righteous are his judgments;"----This theme is the same as we find in Romans 1:18 - 3:20. God will judge according to man's own works. The only hiding place will be the everlasting arms of the Lamb of God. Another reason for praising God is—"because he judged (once for all -) the harlot who defiled (*eptheiren* - the imperfect tense expresses the habit of defiling) the earth with her fornication, and he avenged (*exedikēsen* - 1st aor. indicative, God avenged the Christians, once for all) the blood of his slaves out of her hand." This entire section of scripture cries out against all forms of universalism which are so prevalent today. The nature of the Holy, Living God can not appease sin!

*Verse 3*

Again the heavenly chorus - shouts - "Praise Yahweh" (Hallelujah)! God's judgment had brought to an end the malignant disease which the great harlot had spread by her fornications.

*Verse 4*

The twenty-four elders, who first appeared in 4:4, then again 5:8, praise God "and worshipped saying Amen (so be it?); Hallelujah."

## Verse 5

Another voice joined the great chorus in praising God. "The small and the great" are alike commanded to praise (*aineite* - present, imperative - commanded to continually praise God). There is no one excused for any reason! God is no respecter of persons; He requires the same response from everyone. Being an educated, or wealthy and cultured person in no way places one in a more advantageous position with God. In human society and before men, these factors certainly give their possessor advantage, but will not sway God one wit!

## Verse 6

The next to sing the Hallelujah chorus was a "vast crowd." They sang - "because our Lord God reigned" (the tense shows *the state* of His reigning). During the most intense periods of persecution it would not be abnormal for the faithful to ask - whether or not God reigned as sovereign in all of His Creation. When the human situation is dominated by sin and evil, it is very difficult for us to understand how God was in fact the victor over sin, death, and hell at the cross. The Church has often been charged with an escapist attitude of "other worldness." It presents every Christian with a profound problem, when we attempt to relate our pilgrimage in "this world" to the ultimate victory in the city of God. (See Augustine's *The City of God*; and Etienne Gilson, *Les Metamorphoses de la Cite' de Dieu*, Paris, 1952.)

## Verse 7

John now uses the imagery of the marriage of the Lamb. Praise continues - "because came the marriage of the Lamb, and the wife of Him prepared herself," . . . The O.T. speaks of God as the Bridegroom of Israel in Isaiah 54:6; Hosea 2:16; Ezekial 16:7. Christ appears as the Bridegroom in Matthew 9:15, Mark 2:19f; Luke 5:34f, and John 3:29. John the Baptizer said of Christ - "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of this bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full" (John 3:29 - 1901 translation). In the N.T. Christ is the Bridegroom of His Kingdom (II Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25f; Rev. 3:20; 19:7, 9; 21:2, 9; 22:17). See A. Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*, Eerdmans reprint, chp. 9, pp. 139, *Mothers, Daughters, and Wives in Israel*

gives a brief authoritative account of the Jewish marriage customs in the first century. This information will provide better understanding of the imagery of Bridegroom and Bride in this verse. Jewish wedding customs contained the following elements; (1) *the betrothal* was of much graver significance than engagements in our culture; (2) *the interval* is the specified period of time between the betrothal and the wedding feast. Sometime during this time the bridegroom pays a dowry to the girl's father; (3) *the procession* at the conclusion of the interval. Both parties dress in their finest and prepare themselves for the wedding feast. This *feast* was the fourth major element in Jewish marriage custom.

Wm Hendriksen has an excellent summation in his *More Than Conquerors, op cit.*, pp. 216-217) of the marriage imagery.

God announced the great wedding feast in the O.T. The betrothal took place when God sent Jesus Christ to be heaven's missionary to sinful man. The dowry was paid by the atoning work of our Lord! Are we slighting God's invitation?

John uses the metaphor of a woman three times in *The Revelation* - the mother in chp. 12; the harlot in chps. 17 to 19; and the Bride of Christ from this verse to the end of the Book of Revelation.

#### Verse 8

The wife or the bride of Christ is His Church. She has been given bright, clean, fine linen in order that (*hina* - purpose clause - for the purpose that she be clothed) she might be clothed; for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." The imagery of a guiltless, guileless bride makes crystal clear that God's wife is pure and undefiled.

## SECTION 62

### Text 19:9-10

9 And he saith unto me, Write. Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God. 10 And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

## Initial Questions 19:9-10

1. Why are those bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb blessed - vs. 1?
2. What does the refusal by the heavenly messenger to accept John's worship imply - vs. 10? Does John ever describe a situation in *The Revelation* when Jesus is worshipped and He accepts that worship?
3. Does the messenger claim any special status in the kingdom - vs. 10?

*Verse 9*

John is commanded - "Write thou; blessed (*are*- not in text) the ones having been called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." The source of this truth is God Himself. The implication of this verse is that if one is not invited to the marriage supper, or if invited and he refuses to attend, then he will not be blessed. Our Lord uttered a parable (Matt. 22:1-14) in which He used this imagery. Jesus said that "the kingdom of heaven is like unto". . .then saith he to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways and as many as ye shall find, bid them to the marriage feast." God will not overlook the slighted invitation on the great day of His wrath. The Bride of Christ can never be destroyed but she has often been purified. Christ said - "I will build my Church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

*Verse 10*

John was emotionally overcome by the tremendous revelation which he had received from the heavenly messenger. He says, "And I fell down before his feet to worship him." The object worshipped here was an angel. The Jehovah Witnesses persist in their heretical assertions that our Lord is a creature of God. What was the response of this messenger? Immediately he told John; "See thou do it not; I am your fellow-slave and of your brothers having the witness of Jesus; worship God." There is never a command given by any messenger of God in either the O.T. or N.T. to worship anyone other than the living God. In fact, it was categorized as idolatry if anyone worshipped anything, or anyone other than the God of the Prophets and Apostles. Yet our Lord repeatedly accepted worship from men! Angel worship flourished in Asia Minor at this time. The Colossian and Hebrew Epistles specifically condemn this prac-

tice. The last sentence in vs. 10 is a very difficult one. "For the witness of Jesus (There is no way to determine whether or not this is an objective or subjective genitive. This means there is no way to absolutely determine whether John is speaking of the witness given *by* Christ Himself or whether the witness is *about* Christ.) is the spirit of prophecy." I Peter 1:11 provides us with a very good (possible) commentary. "Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the suffering of Christ, and the glories that should follow them."

## SECTION 63

## Text 19:11-16

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. 13 And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. 15 And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fireceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

## Initial Questions 19:11-16

1. What do the names of the rider of the white horse (Faithful and True) signify about His character - vs. 11?
2. Discuss the imagery of righteous judgment and war in vs. 11.
3. What is a diadem - vs. 12?
4. Where, besides vs. 13, is the name word of God or just Word (in reference to Christ) found?
5. Who makes up the army following the rider upon the white horse - vs. 14?
6. Where else do we find the descriptive phrases "clothed in fine linen, white and pure" - vs. 14? To whom do these descriptions refer?

7. Where else do we read of a "sharp sword" in the N.T. - vs. 15? What is the function of this "sharp sword"?
8. Who is this victor leading the victorious according to vs. 16?

*Verse 11*

Beginning in this verse and continuing to the final shout - "Come Lord Jesus," John is led by the spirit to speak to the triumph of Christ. We have passed through the sections of gloom and despair; now we turn to hope and victory. We have now passed through the valley of darkness. The triumphant warrior leads the great host of the redeemed. The imagery comes from Isaiah 63:1-3 and Psalm 2, etc. The action is taking place in heaven and not on the earth. The rider of the white horse is going to "judge and make war." (Vs. 11-16 reveal the Conquering Christ.)

*Verse 12*

Some of the imagery in this verse is also used in 1:14. He wears many crowns implying his vast rule.

*Verse 13*

The rider of the white horse is identified by His name - "the Word of God" (see *Special Study on The Titles for Christ in The Revelation* - of the Word of God). John has already declared in his Gospel record that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. . . (the Greek text has the last clause instead of "the Word was God."). . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we behold his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." (John 1:1, 14) In the Gospel record, Christ is the absolute Word, and here the title is qualified - *Word of God!*

*Verse 14*

The followers of The Word of God are now mentioned. They are pure and holy, because He is the source and cause of their righteousness. The army of Christ followed (*ekolouthei* - imperfect tense - signifying progressive following or following Him where soever He goes) Him." Their purpose and power were obtained from Him.

*Verse 15*

John uses descriptive imagery which is also found in Hebrews 4:12-13. Out of the mouth of the Word of God "proceeds (con-

tinually proceeds) a sharp sword in order that (*hina* - purpose) he may smite the nations with it; and he will shepherd (or oversee them. This is one of the N.T. terms for Elder;) them with an iron staff;". . . This is a paradoxical symbol - an iron staff! The last clause of this verse is one of the sources for some of the imagery in *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

#### Verse 16

Christ has one name which is known only to Himself; He is known as the Word of God by His followers; and He has this third name which is recorded on His "garment and on his thigh—King of kings and Lord of lords." (See *Special Study on Titles for Christ* under this name.) This name is descriptive of His sovereign control in the universe. He is King (Ruler) over all the rulers of the earth; and His lordship extends in order to encompass the demands of every human lordship. We have here the cosmic King and Lord! (See Acts 10:36—"He is Lord of all." All is neuter, meaning all things or a Cosmic Lordship.)

Note: The Revelation of Christ 19:11-16

1. Christ's description, 19:11-13, 15, 16
2. Christ's followers, 19:14
3. Christ's Acts, 19:11, 15, 16.

## SECTION 64

### Text 19:17-21

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the



horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

#### Initial Questions 19:17-21

1. Discuss the imagery of the angel standing in the sun - vs. 17. Note the glory of the angel which would be necessary in order to identify the angel standing in the midst of the suns radiant brilliance.
2. Why does the angel call all of the scavenger birds to the great supper - vs. 17.
3. Discuss the various categories and statutes of the men mentioned in vs. 18.
4. Discuss the relevance of the imagery of war in vs. 19 in view of contemporary man's fear of the war to end man. (Optimistic men have spoken of past war as wars to end war, now pessimistic man is speaking of the war to end man).
5. What did God do to the beast and the false prophet - vs. 20?
6. Why did John use such sickening imagery to describe the horrors of God's judgment upon the unrighteous - vs. 21?

#### Overthrow and End of the Beast and the False Prophet Chapter 19:17-21

##### *Verse 17*

"One angel standing in the sun"----cried "to all the birds flying in mid-heaven, come, assemble to the great supper of God,"----Birds were omens of evil and destruction in the biblical world. These flying scavengers were looking for food. They were to find it in heaps of slain men.

##### *Verse 18*

All classes of men have fallen in the destruction of the great city. None escaped! The strongest men were not strong enough; the wealthiest were not rich enough to purchase their own safety. Kings and councilmen were powerless before the great god Thanatos. The scavenger birds knew nothing of their wealth or power, or prestige; all human flesh tasted the same to them. How humiliating to arrogant man! (See Ezekiel 39:17-20.)

##### *Verse 19*

John's vision included the beast, kings, and their armies. They had marshalled these armies to wage a final war with the