

## REVELATION 19:5-16

*After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord<sup>[b]</sup> our God! <sup>2</sup> For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." <sup>3</sup> Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" <sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" <sup>5</sup> Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both<sup>[a]</sup> small and great!"*

*<sup>6</sup> And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the<sup>[d]</sup> Lord God Omnipotent reigns! <sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

*<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." <sup>10</sup> And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

*<sup>11</sup> Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had<sup>[e]</sup> a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup> He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,<sup>[f]</sup> followed Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> Now out of His mouth goes a sharp<sup>[g]</sup> sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. <sup>16</sup> And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:*

*KING OF KINGS AND  
LORD OF LORDS.*

We continue our series in the Book of Revelation this week, but we are stepping a little bit out of sequence. We have jumped ahead and skipped chapter 18, due to the fact that we have a wedding later today. Of all the things that are talked about when marriage is discussed today, what marriage is, what marriage is not, what the purpose of marriage is etc. etc.

One of the things that very often gets neglected is that marriage is a picture, or a portrait of Christ and His bride. We have all heard this, and we all know this based upon hearing it, in some cases hundreds of times. But what does it mean, and how does the marriage of Christ and His bride instruct us today on the meaning and purpose of marriage?

Well hopefully we can see many of these answers in today's text. Our text today begins with the apostle hearing a great voice in heaven. This voice we are told is of a great multitude. The multitude is crying out in unison. David Chilton rightly points out that this chapter is meant to be understood as a battle hymn. To some this is disturbing, not necessarily because of the modern hatred of all things dealing with conflict, but they feel that a battle hymn at this location would be misplaced. After all, is not this the consummation? Why at the end, is the multitude in heaven singing a battle hymn? Well, I want to answer this question by coming against one of my most despised, yet surprisingly popular views regarding anything prophetic.

We have all heard the varying eschatological positions. There is of course the dispensational position, the pre-mill position, the a-mill position, and of course there is the post-mill position. All of these views are held by Christians. I want to make clear I do not think any of these views by themselves is indicative of where a person stands in his or her relationship with God, but there is one view above all of these that really disturbs me, and that is the view that the Christian comedian Mike Warnke called pan-millennialism that really disturbs me. To summarize that view, Warnke said, it does not really matter what you believe, because it will all pan out in the end. I will admit, when I first heard him say that, I laughed. I thought it was funny, as do most people who hear it for the first time, but on thinking

about it, this view is more disturbing to me even than Dispensationalism. Those of you who know me, will understand that if that is the case, I must really be opposed to that view.

Why does it disturb me so much? Because it makes certain assumptions, that really makes certain parts of the Word of God, unnecessary. It makes assumptions about "the end." And of course, it also makes assumptions about what it means that "things will work out." Well, the Bible not only assures us that things will work out, but it also tells in many ways, how it will do so. It will be done in large part through conflict and battle. I want to remind us quickly what that means.

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 tells us *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, <sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."*

The common assumption is that since our weapons are not carnal, they are not in any sense real. Let me assure you they are very real, and they are as the text tells us they are also mighty. The Pan- Mill position gives up trying to deal with the Scripture, and rests itself in a hope that they have no basis in attaining to.

Let's look at today's text and see what we can learn from it. The loud voice, crying in unison from heaven, saying "Hallelujah, Salvation and power belong to our God." This is the beginning of this heavenly anthem, it goes on from here, but what we need to be aware of is that this is very similar to the previous anthem that was proclaimed in Revelation Chapter 11. I want to read from the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> verse in Revelation 11 and I want us to notice the similarities. In Revelation 11:15 the Angel is preparing to sound the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet.

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms<sup>of</sup> of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and

ever!" <sup>16</sup>And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, <sup>17</sup>saying:

"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,  
The One who is and who was and who is to come,<sup>[a]</sup>  
Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.  
<sup>18</sup>The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,  
And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,  
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the  
saints,  
And those who fear Your name, small and great,  
And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

<sup>19</sup>Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant<sup>[b]</sup> was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

One of my favorite verses in the entire Book of Revelation is verse 15 of Chapter 11 where it speaks of the Kingdoms of this world becoming the Kingdom of our Christ. The question from an eschatological perspective is, when does or when will this happen? Or is this an ongoing action. I have mentioned what I consider to be the major theme of this Book, that Christ Jesus is King, and as King, ultimately all of His enemies will be subdued underneath His feet. In Chapter 15 we read that He will reign forever and ever. In Chapter 19 in the first several verses we see this same theme. Christ has vanquished Babylon the great, the harlot has been cast down, and His reign has been consummated.

Back to Chapter 19 we hear this vast multitude crying out "*Alleluia, Salvation and power belong to our God. For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.*" <sup>3</sup> Again they said, "*Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!*" <sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "*Amen! Alleluia!*"

The people of God have prayed for the destruction of Babylon and of the harlot, and now with her destruction they are full of rejoicing. 4 times in this passage we hear them cry out, "Alleluia." These cries of Alleluia, are the only uses of that word in the entire Old Testament. The word literally translated means "Praise ye the Lord", or "Praise Ye Yahweh." These first four verses show the people of God not only agreeing with God's judgments, but they are also thanking Him for righteously and justly bringing judgment on Babylon the great.

In verse 5 we hear a new voice. We are not told whose voice this is, but we are told that this voice is coming from the heavenly throne crying out "*Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both<sup>[a]</sup> small and great!*" What has led us to this point in our survey has been a period of conflict and struggle. We have seen God's enemies raise up and wage war against Christ and they have also waged war against the Bride. The weapons they have used have been slander, threats, and even violence, but in the end we have seen that the Bridegroom has vanquished every threat.

The multitude who has been praying for the vanquishing of God's enemies are now told to praise God, and to fear Him. This is a command given to all. The great and the small alike.

*And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the<sup>[a]</sup> Lord God Omnipotent reigns! <sup>7</sup>Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."<sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

The Book of Revelation has been called by some "A tale of two cities." The two cities are Jerusalem from above, and Babylon. The Book is also a tale of two women. Yes there are other women in the Book, but the two women that seem to dominate the scene are the harlot, and of course the Bride. These two women, represent very different ideas. The harlot is a picture of unfaithfulness, to say the least, but in the Book of Revelation she has been cast out. The Seven sealed Book is a Covenantal divorce decree, but as the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the age to come, it also speaks about who

is made subject in that age. Here in Revelation we read those words, "His Bride has made herself ready." In Ephesians 5, we have one of the most amazing images of what Christ has done for His bride.

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

*<sup>26</sup>That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

*<sup>27</sup>That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

The Love of Christ for His church is compared to the love husbands are to have for their wife. This is because, ultimately marriage is about this picture. Marriage is the institution that gives us this picture better than anything else. They are to give themselves on behalf of their spouse in the same way that Christ did.

All the way back in Genesis. Adam was given a task. He was to Guard and protect the garden, and He was also told to Guard and protect his wife. We all know the story, and Adam failed in His task. He failed to protect both the garden and his wife. There has been much written about what Adam could of done differently, but if this passage out of Ephesians means anything to us, Adam would of laid down his own life on behalf of the woman.

To go back to the garden in this instance has been compared by some to stretching the meaning a little bit, But the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 11 when speaking of marriage also goes back to the garden in describing the attitude he wants to see in the Church of Jesus Christ.

*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

*<sup>3</sup>But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

The battle anthem continues by describing how the Bride would be attired.

*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”<sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

Linen has been used symbolically throughout this book describing the clothing that is worn by God people. We have already discussed what it means, but this is where the meaning of the fine linen worn by the saints of God. This fine linen is the “righteous acts of the saints.”

What are these righteous deeds and what does this passage mean? It needs to be pointed out that these righteous acts do not emanate from the bride. The text tells us very clearly that it was granted to her to be arrayed in fine linen. Her righteousness, is not her own.

The next part of this book necessitates that we answer a question. I think we all know the answer, but I want to make it very clear. Who is this bride? I don’t think this is a difficult question. But, I will tell you, I have watched Bible teachers come to so many disagreements about this it has to be mentioned. The reason there has been so much disagreement about this is not because it is a particularly difficult text, but because of what the text says. If the Bride is the Church of Jesus Christ, which it is. Then why is it mentioned at this point. Let me explain by looking at the following verse:

*Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'"* What is this marriage supper? And what does it signify? The marriage supper of the lamb is celebrated in Churches world wide on a weekly basis. Here they celebrate the victory Christ has won on her behalf. He gave Himself for her, but what is interesting, is that this marriage supper takes place, meaning the marriage is consummated, before the King rides forth in victory.

*<sup>11</sup>Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had<sup>[e]</sup> a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup>He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup>And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,<sup>[f]</sup> followed Him*

on white horses. <sup>15</sup>Now out of His mouth goes a sharp<sup>[a]</sup> sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.<sup>16</sup>And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

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Revelation 19 goes on with further descriptions of Christ's conquest, but what we need to notice here is that Christ is riding forward in victory after this marriage supper. And it is here unlike in Chapter 6 that He is followed by the armies in the heavens who are also riding White Horses.

I spent much of my younger life, believing this passage was about some point in the far distant future. But, this passage is a picture of the age we currently live in. Christ rides forth conquering and to conquer as it says in Revelation 6, but here he is being followed by His bride. He is being followed by the armies in the heavens. Christ's bride has made herself ready, and her purpose in this is she now follows him wherever He goes.

Revelation 19 is one of my favorite sections of this Book because we read that the armies of heaven follow Christ in His judgment, and they are riding forth from heaven. This aspect has led many to conclude this has to be at a distant future point, but we need to remember from the perspective of the New Testament Church, they are already ascended into the heavenlies. Ephesians 2 beginning in the 4th tells us we are already seated with Christ in Heavenly places:

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,

These passages are passages that are often misunderstood, not because they are unclear, but more likely because they are incredible. We find it difficult to believe



that we are seated in the heavens with Christ. We find it difficult to believe we have access to His real presence, and sometimes we look around and we find it difficult to believe that He is conquering all His enemies, but as this passage told us today He has been crowned with many crowns, and our command is to follow Him as He leads.