

Hallelujah! Praise Our God

Revelation 19:1-6

Perhaps this question has been lingering in your mind throughout this series on The Book of the Revelation: *When do we get to the Hallelujah Chorus?*

All through our discussions of the glory of the Almighty God, the rebellion of mankind and the awful penalty for that rebellion, we have tried to preach Christ. Christ alone is the answer: His finished work atoned for the rebellion of wicked mankind. Throughout this series, Pastor Rodney King and I have tried to appeal for repentance and greater faith in the One whom God sent to redeem the world. So, when do we get to the *Hallelujah Chorus*? You are no doubt familiar with George Frederic Handel's oratorio, *Messiah* and its *Hallelujah Chorus*. That memorable chorus is based on Revelation 11:15 and Revelation 19:1-6 with its chorus of Hallelujahs.

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.’” (Revelation 11:15).

And the chorus of “Hallelujahs” rings out from Revelation 19:

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous *are* His judgments: for He has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. 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 thundering, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.” (Revelation 19:1-6)

Here we can see the glory of God, the rebellion of mankind, and the awful penalty for that rebellion. But Revelation 19 portrays the Almighty God, the true and righteous Judge of all, in an ultimate, glorious display. In this passage, we learn how and why we ought to praise our Just and Perfect God for His true and righteous reign.

The Perfect Prophetic

Both Revelation 11:15 and 19:1-6 use what is known as the prophetic perfect tense. This is a literary technique used in the Scripture to describe future events as an absolute certainty; the fulfillment of the prophecy is so certain that it is as if it had already happened. So, in Revelation 19, God “has judged” Babylon.

What is a Hallelujah?

What is a “Hallelujah?” The word means, “to praise God” (as it is translated in Revelation 19:5). The Hebrew [hallel] means, “to praise.” [Yah] is an abbreviation for the personal name of God. So each of these “hallelujahs” is designed to praise the Lord. The Hebrew word “Hallelujah” is commonly translated, “Praise the Lord” in the Old Testament. For instance, Psalm 106 begins and ends with the word “Hallelujah” translated “praise the Lord.” Psalms 113-118 are sometimes referred to as “the Egyptian Hallel” since they are often sung to celebrate the Passover in the Exodus from Egypt. So let's study the *Hallelujahs* in Revelation 19:1-6.

Five Excellent Reasons to Praise Our God

The First excellent reason to praise our God

Hallelujah! Babylon, the Religious System Will Be Judged, 19:1-2

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous *are* His judgments: for He has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.

An angel announced the new visions in Revelation 17 and 18. But in Revelation 19, the vision is introduced by a chorus from Heaven saying, "HALLELUJAH!" In Revelation 17, we learnedⁱ about the destruction of Mystery Babylon the Great, the Babylonish religious system. In Revelation 18, we learnedⁱⁱ about the coming destruction of the rebellious city, Babylon, the capital city of the Antichrist.

What will lead to these destructions? The last verse in Revelation 18 reads, **"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."**

This rebellious city, the last successor to all those cities that thrive in the spirit of antichrist, embodies this wicked world system. **"And in her..."** in some sense, in Babylon, is the long and tragic history of killing people – both unjust and just. Think about this the next time you hear about the rabid bloodshed in our large cities.

Beginning with Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, who killed his brother, wickedness has wielded control – resulting in the deaths of millions of God's image-bearers, human beings. Some, such as Augustine, have argued for the concept of "just war." But where does war itself come from? James 4:1-2 answers, **"From whence *come* wars [battles] and fighting among you? *Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not*"** (James 4:1-2).

Instead of teaching humanity to prayerfully depend upon the Lord, the Babylonish world system teaches people to lust after control – even if it means killing other people. But believers understand that they must yield control to the Lord rather than try to wield control. God will avenge **"the blood of His servants at her hand."**

The only thing more grievous than these wicked abominations is rejecting God's answer for these wicked abominations. (See Matthew 11:20-24.)

The True and Righteous Judge

"...Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous *are* His judgments: for He has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand" (19:1-2).

- Praise the Lord our God for His salvation; He is our Deliverer. He alone can rescue humanity from the clutches of wicked rebellion.
- Praise the Lord our God for His glory; He is unique and excellent. All His ways are best.
- Praise the Lord our God for His honor; He is worthy of our esteem and all our worship.
- Praise the Lord our God for His power; He has strength that none can surpass.
- Praise the Lord our God for His true and righteous judgments; He is worthy of praise because He acts truthfully – according to reality. He acts righteously – according to His perfectly pure character.

Rest assured that the Lord our God will judge the wicked system of idolatry that has dominated this world. He is the Lord, the Light, who will overcome the darkness. When you face injustice, prejudice and oppression, remember Him and wait for Him. He will truly and righteously judge the earth. The Lord our God will destroy spiritual idolatry with all the physical adultery it has foisted upon the earth. Don't take revenge into your own hands. Remember that God will avenge His servants. In this passage, we learn how and why we ought to praise our Just and Perfect God for His true and righteous reign.

The Second excellent reason to praise our God

Hallelujah! Babylon, the Rebellious City Will Be Judged, 19:3

"And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever."

Verse 3 is closely connected to verses 1 and 2, but with a special focus on the eternal condemnation of those who live for Babylon, the rebellious city. Yes, the massive city will be destroyed. But what is meant by the phrase, "... and her smoke rose up forever and ever?" The Gospel of Mark, chapter 9, speaks of Hell and its unquenchable fire. And Mark 9:47-48 describes, "...hell fire: where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." The terrifying reality is this: those who love the city of Babylon with all its wickedness will burn for all eternity in Hell and the Lake of Fire.

Practically speaking, what should our response be to this truth, according to Revelation 19:3? We should say, "Hallelujah! Praise our God!" In His perfect righteousness, the Lord our God will pour out His wrath upon the wicked.

The Third excellent reason to praise our God

Hallelujah! God, the King of All, Will Be Exalted, 19:4

"And the four and twenty elders and the four [living beings] fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia!"

Verse 4 seems to be a direct response to the command in Revelation 18:20, "**Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God has avenged you on her.**" How should we respond to this command? Like these elders and angels in Heaven, we should fall down and worship our King: God upon His throne. We should say, "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!" To say, "Amen!" is to confirm the truth of somethingⁱⁱⁱ. Jesus began many of His statements with "Verily, verily" (or "Truly, truly") to affirm the absolute certainty or credibility of His statement. For a man to receive or embrace God's Words is (in the words of John 3:33) "**to set to his seal that God is true.**" Have you received God's Word and "set to your seal that God is true?" John 3:36 says, "**He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.**" Don't miss the truth of that verse: The one who believes on the Son of God for salvation has everlasting life. To believe on the Son is to place all your dependence upon His dying on the cross for your sins and rising again from the dead as your only hope of going to Heaven. Have you trusted Him *that way*? All those who refuse Him should know that "he that believes not the Son shall not see [eternal] life, but the wrath of God abides on him" as it will for all eternity. How will the elders and angels in Heaven respond to this truth? They will say, "Amen! Hallelujah!"

The Fourth excellent reason to praise our God

Hallelujah! God, the Redeemer, Will Be Exalted, 19:5

"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great."

When we read about these elders and angels in Heaven praising the Lord, how should we respond? Revelation 19:5 shows us how to respond: "**Praise our God, all you His servants, and you that fear**

Him, both small and great.” From the most well-known believer to the most obscure believer – the small and great and all those in between – each one should praise the Lord. This verse equates God’s servants with those who fear the Lord. Do you fear the Lord? Do you remember His Presence with you, even when no one other person is around? Here is a wonderful reminder to apply today. Malachi 3:16 tells us, **“Then they that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”** This very day, in our discussion groups and throughout this week, we can make God-honoring entries into our Book of Remembrance.^{iv} Here is the right response from all God’s servants: **“Praise our God!”** In this passage, we learn how and why we ought to praise our Just and Perfect God for His true and righteous reign.

The Fifth excellent reason to praise our God

Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent Reigns, 19:6

“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 thundering, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

The final “Hallelujah!” in this passage resonates across the ages: “Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns!” We can trust the One who has all power in Heaven and earth. Shall we lift our voices today and join the voices of the great multitude? Like the roaring sounds of Niagara Falls or the Atlantic Ocean, joined by earth-shaking thunder, we ought to praise our Just and Perfect God for His true and righteous reign.

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Discussion Questions

1. Based on Revelation 19:1-2, what should we remember about the Lord when we see wickedness and injustice raging in our society?
2. Most people find it easy to praise the Lord for His mercy and goodness. But Revelation 19:1-6 teaches us to praise the Lord for His righteous indignation against wickedness. If that feels strange to someone, how would you help them get a Biblical perspective?
3. Where and when should we say, “Amen!” in a public service or a small group conversation?
4. What does it mean to be a servant of the Lord God Almighty? How would you describe such a person?
5. How could each of us make entries into our Book of Remembrance today (Malachi 3:16-17)?
6. Knowing that we will praise the Lord with “*Hallelujahs*” in heaven, how could we prepare for that during our earthly lives?
7. Since we know the reality of the true judgments in Revelation 19:1-6, how should we appeal to the lost people around us this week?

ⁱ War against the Lamb, accessed at <https://www.cbcfindlay.org/war-against-the-lamb/>

ⁱⁱ God Will Avenge, accessed at <https://www.cbcfindlay.org/god-will-avenge/>

ⁱⁱⁱ For a fuller explanation of saying, “Amen!” see “And All God’s People Said” accessed at <https://www.cbcfindlay.org/and-all-gods-people-said/>

^{iv} See “What Did You Say?” accessed at <https://www.cbcfindlay.org/what-did-you-say/>