

Wedding Bells Ring out in Heaven

Text: Revelation 19:1-21

Introduction:

1. We now reach the climax of the Book of Revelation and in a very real sense, the climax of all of human history. A note of triumph and victory rings throughout the whole chapter.
2. The chapter divides into two main sections. In Vs. 1-10 we have the worship in heaven over the fall of Antichrist's empire (Babylon) and then the description of the second coming of Christ in Vs. 11-21.
3. J. Vernon McGee mentions that chapter 19 "*Marks a dramatic change in the tone of Revelation. The destruction of Babylon, the capital of the Beast's kingdom, marks the end of the Great Tribulation. The sombre gives way to song. The transfer is from darkness to light, from black to white, from dreary days of judgment to bright days of blessing. This chapter makes a definite division in Revelation and ushers in the greatest event for this earth the Second Coming of Christ. It is the bridge between the Great Tribulation and the Millennium.*"
4. The second coming of Christ is a **MAJOR** theme of the Scriptures. There are around 1800 prophecies of Christ's second coming in the O.T. For every **one** prophecy about the first coming of Christ, there are **eight** prophecies about the second coming of Christ. In the N.T. there are over 300 references to the return of Jesus Christ. (Dr. R. Jeffress)
5. Outline for Revelation 19:
 - I. The Worship before His Coming (Vs. 1-6)
 - II. The Wedding before His Coming (Vs. 7-10)
 - III. The Wonder of His Coming (Vs. 11-16)
 - IV. The War at His Coming (Vs. 17-21)

I. THE WORSHIP BEFORE HIS COMING (VS. 1-6)

There are four Alleluias in this section that divide into two major worship themes:

A. Alleluia: God is Righteous (Vs. 1-4)

1. The Anthem of their Worship (Vs. 1-3)
 - a. The respect of their praise (vs. 1)
 - i. Alleluia = equivalent to the Old Testament "praise ye the LORD" (Hallelujah).
 - ii. Salvation = salvation is all of God and he is worthy to be praised.
 - iii. Glory = All glory belongs to God and he is worthy to be glorified.
 - iv. Honour = God is worthy of all the honour for what He has done.
 - v. Power = All power belongs to God and He is to be praised for the exercise of that power.
 - b. The reasons for their praise (vs. 2)
 - i. God's judging of the Great Whore (2a).

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- ii. God's avenging of His servants (2b). Rom. 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance is mine**; I will repay, saith the Lord."
 - c. The repetition of their praise (vs. 3)
 - i. "again they said, Alleluia" = the word is repeated for emphasis.
 - ii. "her smoke rose up" = a vivid depiction of the city burning up.
 - iii. "for ever and ever" = looks beyond the temporal destruction of the city to the eternal damnation of the city's inhabitants.
 - iv. Thomas: "The flames that destroy the physical city will, of course, burn out in due time. Yet beyond this song must view the eternal fate of individuals intimately connected with the city."
 - 2. The Affirmation of their Worship (Vs. 4)
 - a. "Amen; Alleluia" = they voice their agreement with the worship that has been offered.
 - b. Note: Saying Amen in affirmation of the truth is entirely appropriate in the local church.
- B. Alleluia: God is Reigning (Vs. 5-6)**
- 1. The Call to Worship (Vs. 5)
 - a. "a voice came out of the throne" = the identity of the voice is not stated but since it comes from the throne, it is likely the voice of God or of one of the four beasts close to the throne.
 - b. "Praise our God" = we are commanded to praise the Lord.
 - c. "all ye his servants...both small and great" = all the servants of the Lord in heaven are to praise God irrespective of their class.
 - 2. The Sound of the Worship (Vs.6a)

The sound of this awesome worship service is likened to three things:

 - a. As the voice of a great multitude.
 - b. As the voice of many waters.
 - c. As the voice of mighty thunderings.
 - 3. The Theme of the Worship (Vs. 6b)
 - a. 'omnipotent' = means Almighty, possession unlimited power.
 - b. 'reigneth' = God had been reigning before this point but this is a special moment where the earth is about to be under His direct rulership for the first time since the fall of man.

II. THE WEDDING BEFORE HIS COMING (VS. 7-10)

Observe several truths about this wedding:

A. The Gladness at the Wedding (Vs. 7)

- 1. "give honour to him" = Christ is the focus of this wedding. It is He who has made it all possible. It is He who has prepared the bride.
- 2. "marriage of the Lamb is come" = the phrase "is come" is in the aorist tense which indicates the marriage has already taken place in heaven. The wife of the Lamb is already in heaven so the rapture

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has to have taken place before Christ returns to earth! Luke 12:36 clearly states that Christ returns “from the wedding”.

3. “his wife” = the church is the Lamb’s wife (Eph. 5:22-33; 2 Cor. 11:2).
4. “hath made herself ready” = she stands before Christ solely on the basis of His merits. Her works are the fruit of her salvation, the practical outworking of her position in Christ (Eph. 2:10).
5. Background of a Jewish wedding:
 - a. A marriage contract was drawn up and a dowry paid for the bride. The groom then returned to prepare a room in his father’s house. At a time only known to the father, the groom would be sent to get his bride. The procession would proceed through the streets with the blowing of trumpets and the shout “Behold the bridegroom cometh!” Upon arrival at the bride’s house, the groom would stand outside and call her forth to meet him. She would then sit on a sedan chair and be lifted into the air and carried to the father’s house. In fact, it was even termed “flying to the father’s house.” At the father’s house the marriage would be consummated in the bridal chamber where the groom and his bride would be hidden away for 7 days. Then they would come out of the bridal chamber where the bride would be presented and the wedding feast would commence.
 - b. Christ came the first time and paid the price for the church’s redemption in His own blood. He is now preparing a place of us in the Father’s House in heaven. At the rapture, Christ lifts us into the air and takes us back to the Father’s house where the wedding takes place. Similar to the Jewish wedding where the bride and groom were hidden away for 7 days, the church will be in heaven with Christ for the 7-year tribulation period. At the end of the tribulation, the church accompanies Christ at His second coming back to earth where the marriage feast will be celebrated.
6. Note: A Christian wedding foreshadows this glorious moment in heaven and should be a time of godly rejoicing and celebration.

B. The Garment for the Wedding (Vs. 8)

There are 2 important truths to note about the bride’s garment:

1. It is a Provided Garment (Vs. 8a)
 - a. “to her was granted” = the word ‘granted’ means ‘given’. She does not stand before Him dressed in her own garments but in a garment provided for her by her Heavenly Bridegroom.
 - b. What a picture of salvation! Before we are saved we are clothed in the filthy rages of our own righteousness (Is. 64:6) but through salvation, we are clothed in the garments of salvation.
 - c. Isaiah 61:10 “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; **for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation**, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.”
 - d. Illustration: Christ’s seamless robe at the cross (exchange that took place). “I gave him my old tattered garment, he gave me a

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robe of pure white.” Through salvation I exchanged my depravity for His purity, my rags for His righteousness, my sin for His all sufficient salvation, my ugliness for His beauty. At the cross I received eternal life in place of eternal death, heaven rather than hell, justification rather than damnation.

2. It is a Pure Garment (Vs. 8b)
 - a. ‘arrayed’ = means to be clothed. The same word is used in Rev. 3:18 for clothing that covers one’s nakedness. “Unlike weddings of this present age, there will be no immodest apparel at the wedding of this chaste bride.” (David Cloud)
 - b. “fine linen” = a very costly, beautiful fabric. Her clothing is distinct from that of the harlot (Rev. 17:4). “This is the sober dress of a woman of dignity, not the flashy splendor of a harlot.” (Thomas)
 - c. ‘clean’ = comes from the Greek word meaning ‘pure’.
 - d. ‘white’ = the word means ‘radiant’ (Gr. Lampros) so it is a radiant whiteness that reflects the glory of God. The same word is used to describe the ‘gorgeous’ robe that was put on Christ (Lk. 23:11) and the “bright” clothing of the angel that appeared to Cornelius (Acts 10:30). It is symbolic of imputed righteousness.
 - e. “the righteousness of saints” = the garment symbolizes the imputed righteousness of Christ. Note: Beware of modern versions that change this to the “righteous acts/deeds of the saints”! E.G. The NIV reads, “Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)”
3. Challenge: Christian marriage is intended of God to be a picture of the union between Christ and the church. There is a sense where every Christian wedding, in some way, foreshadows and points forward to this great future day. Therefore, Christian weddings should be permeated with the spirit of holiness and be conducted in a manner fitting the sacred picture it represents. There is no place for immodesty, revealing clothing, dancing and drinking at a Christian wedding! There is also no grounds for accepting perverted marriages of a couple of the same gender as some sort of expression of Christian marriage.

C. The Guests at the Wedding (Vs. 9-10)

1. The blessing of the guests (Vs. 9a)
 - a. To be invited to this feast will be a high and lofty honor. Illustration: Imagine being an invited guest to a royal wedding.
 - b. That said, there is something special about being in the privileged position of the bride. To be a part of the church which is Christ’s bride is something so grand and glorious, we can’t begin to fully comprehend it.
2. The identity of the guests (Vs. 9b)
 - a. Question: Who are the guests at the marriage supper?
 - b. Answer: They can’t be the church as the church is the bride. The guests are:

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- i. The Old Testament saints – John the Baptist is an example. He was not a part of the bride but a friend of the bridegroom (See John 3:29).
 - ii. The Tribulation saints.
 - iii. The angels (very likely).
 - iv. Note: Can you imagine what the marriage supper of the Lamb will be like when the Redeemed of all the ages gather together to celebrate Christ's work of Redemption. Imagine sitting down for fellowship with heroes of the faith like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist etc...
3. The reaction of John (Vs. 10)
- a. John is so overwhelmed at the glory of what is being revealed to him he falls down to worship. In Rev. 22:8, John does this again.
 - b. The angel's actions in preventing John from doing so are significant. Angels are not to receive worship from men.
 - c. "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" = Christ is the theme of all the Scriptures generally and of prophecy particularly. To neglect the subject of Bible prophecy is to be poorer spiritually and to miss out on so much Revelation of Christ's Person and Glory. To neglect prophecy is to not "preach Christ" in His fulness as revealed in the Scriptures.
 - d. Walvoord: "How poverty stricken is any theology that minimizes the second coming of Christ, and how limited the hope that does not include this glorious climax to God's program of exalting His Son and putting all creation under His control (See Psalm 2)."

Conclusion:

1. Have you been clothed in the righteousness of Christ? Have you been born again?
2. Are you a part of Christ's bride who will be caught up in the rapture?