**“AMEN AND HALLELUJAH!”**

**REVELATION CHAPTER 19**

*[have class members name a person or persons they know personally, living or dead, who they know are born again followers of Jesus]*

Here in the 19th Chapter we get one final look at all the characters we have seen before – Jesus the Lamb (the main character), God the Father, the Ancient of Days, the 24 elders, the 4 living creatures, the angels and the great heavenly multitude, the church, the bride of Christ *[name those previously mentioned]*, kings and commanders and armies of the earth, the beast, the false prophet, and Satan. The stage is set and all the characters are assembled for what I like to call “the Hallelujah chorus of human history.”

It may surprise you to know that Revelation Chapter 19 is the only place in the entire New Testament where the word, “Hallelujah” appears. Four times in this chapter the word “Hallelujah” is used (v 1, 3, 4 and 6). It literally means, “Praise the Lord!” We are on shouting ground!

V 1: After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,”

“After this...” After the wrath of God, Chapters 6-18, the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments, after Babylon has fallen, after the economic collapse of the evil world system, after all the terrible events of the Tribulation... the heavenly host made up of all the saints of all time sings a Hallelujah chorus. Actually we observe them here doing the very same thing they were doing back in Ch 4 and 5. It is the same thing we will do for eternity, that is, praising God. In the first Hallelujah the heavenly host praises the Lord for three things:

Salvation – We have been delivered, set free from the penalty of our sins. Not by anything we did, but because of what Jesus did on the cross. We sinners deserve only hell, but because of His sacrifice we are joint heirs of the King! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Glory – The glory of God, the Shekinah glory, the manifested presence of God. Throughout human history God has revealed Himself in many ways: in a burning bush, on a mountaintop, in a fire and in a cloud, in Solomon’s temple and eventually in human flesh, in the person Jesus Christ. Heaven is getting excited here. You see, Jesus Christ is preparing to make an appearance on earth once again. When Jesus came the first time He came in lowly humility, was placed in a manger, rode upon a donkey, and was known as a carpenter’s son and a servant. This time, as we will see, He is coming in full glory, in exalted victory and in divine judgment.

Power – The awesome, miraculous power of God. God has displayed His power throughout the Book of Revelation, but nothing compares to what He is about to do next.

V 2-3: “for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

In the second Hallelujah there is rejoicing because the false religious worship (Ch 17), “the great prostitute,” has been judged. There is also much excitement in heaven over the fact that finally the blood of the martyred saints will be avenged. God’s judgment on the evil world will be severe and it will be final. The smoke going up, rising, indicates just how great will be the devastation. I was astounded after the terrible events of September 11, 2001 seeing the utter devastation at Ground Zero. Day after day that pile of debris continued to smolder even weeks after the buildings had collapsed. That scene is similar to what we read here – smoke rising up from the ashes of Babylon. But not just for a few weeks or a month, but “forever and ever!”

V 4: And the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”

These 24 elders and 4 living creatures echo the finality of Babylon’s destruction in the third Hallelujah. It has been a while since we saw these guys (Ch 5). Do you remember who we said they are? The 24 elders represent the leaders of the N.T. and O.T. saints, the 12 apostles (the church) and the 12 tribes of Israel (God’s chosen people). The four living creatures represent angelic beings. Together they praise the Lord for the destruction of Babylon.

V 5-6: And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.” Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.”

The great heavenly multitude is joined in a great anthem of praise by the Lord Jesus Himself, “the roar of many waters ” identified in Rev 1:15 as Jesus. “The sound of mighty peals of thunder” in Rev 6:1 describes the voices of the 4 living creatures. The level of anticipation in heaven is building. God has had enough. He is about to subdue this world. This fourth and final Hallelujah is a reminder that God still rules. He has never left His throne. He will never leave His throne. He remains in control.

Well, Jesus is ready to return, but there is still one last detail that must be taken care of before He does. Look at v 7…

V 7: “Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;”

In Bible times the practice of marriage was different from today. Back then there was a period of betrothal, kind of like engagement today except with a binding legal contract tied to it. Then a period of separation where the man went and prepared his house for his bride. During this time the only communication between the future bride and groom was done through a friend. A wedding date was set. On the appointed day the bride prepared herself and waited for her groom to show up. Dressed in his best clothes he would go with all his friends to the home of the bride’s parents. Usually musicians and singers accompanied them. After picking up his bride the couple would return to the father of the groom’s house with his friends, her friends and her family and there a great wedding feast would be served. This wedding feast was all part of the big wedding event that could go on for up to two weeks.

Here in verse 7 who is the groom? Reference Matt 22 and the Parable of the Marriage of the King’s Son. In that parable the king is God and the king’s son is Jesus. In John 3:29, John the Baptist, speaking about Jesus, referred to Him as the bridegroom and to himself (John) as the friend of the bridegroom. So I can say with certainty that the groom here is none other than Jesus Christ. Who then is the bride? Well, if the false church of the antichrist was referred to as a harlot, then the true church, made up of true followers of Jesus Christ, is the bride of the Lamb, Jesus. In Eph 5:22-32, Paul makes an analogy between the relationship of husbands and wives to the relationship between Christ and the church. So, Jesus is the groom and the church is His bride.

According to this passage in Revelation 19, Jesus is about to claim his bride, the church, and the analogy of the marriage celebration is used. You say, well Jesus has been in heaven with the church that was raptured, the Old and New Testament saints and the saints for all time as well as those martyred during the Tribulation. Yes, but not all the saints are in heaven yet. There are still many that remain on the earth. Jesus is about to go and get them. The marriage feast is being prepared for the entire bride of Christ to enjoy with her bridegroom.

V 8: “it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”-- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Please hear this -- the righteous deeds that we as saints perform here is NOT a reference to working for our salvation. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. This passage speaks of the acts of righteousness we do after we’re saved. Paul says in Eph 2:10 that “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works…” The result of being transformed (Rom 12:2) and being a new creature in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) is that we walk in them – our righteous acts, our good works.

I mentioned the Parable of the Marriage of the King’s Son. In that parable the king provides the wedding guests with the proper wedding garments. However one man chose not to wear the garment that he had been provided with and he could give no satisfactory explanation. Because of his failure to meet the king’s requirement (wear the wedding garments that he supplied), the man was cast out. As Christians, we are to wear the required attire, that being, not our own righteousness but rather the righteousness of God supplied to us in Jesus.

V 9: And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

Here is the message the angel gives to John to pass on to all of us: “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” You see, without an invitation you won’t get in! My question for you is: Do you have your invitation? Have you made Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior? Are you on your way to heaven? The word “blessed” means “happy” or “honored.” There is no greater happiness you will experience than the day of your salvation. There is no greater honor you will have bestowed on you than the day you stand before your Lord and have Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

V 10: Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Have you ever had somebody give you really good news and you reacted by hugging him or her? They probably had nothing to do with whatever it was they were telling you about but you had to express your happiness to someone. It was just a reaction. The same thing happens here. John is so overwhelmed at the awesome message he has just received that he falls down at the feet of the angel to worship him. The angel quickly reminds John that only God is to be worshipped. Everything that is written in scripture points to, it’s about Jesus.

Well, the stage is set for Jesus’ glorious return to earth…

In Rev 4:1 John saw a door open in heaven and he was translated through that door into heaven, picturing the rapture of all the saints. There he witnessed a glorious scene. Again in Rev 19 the door to heaven is opened and those who went in back in Ch 4 are ready to return.

Are you ready to get excited? Here we go…

V 11-16: Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

This to me is the most glorious scene in the entire Bible. I could just stay right here and not say another word. It is an overwhelming passage to absorb. In v 11 we see Jesus returning in exalted victory. He’s pictured riding a white horse. That is exactly what the Roman commanders did when they returned after a successful military campaign. Here we see Jesus coming as conquering King. Notice He is called, “Faithful and True.” These are names that have been used for Jesus before. John referred to Jesus as the “faithful witness” in Rev 1:5. In Rev 3:7 Jesus was described as “holy and true.” The words “Faithful and True” are capitalized indicating that they are His name – His very essence, His character. They describe WHO Jesus IS.

We see that “His eyes are like a flame of fire” (v 12). This represents judgment. When Jesus came the first time He wore a crown of thorns, but here He wears not just one crown, but many crowns, diadems, symbolic of victory. The name, “written that no one knows but himself” may be the same name He will write on the overcomers mentioned in Rev 2:17 and 3:12. It’s a new name. It’s HIS name.

Jesus is described wearing His bloodstained war garments (v 13). But it is not the blood from soldiers at some battlefield. His robe is stained with His own blood! You see Jesus won the victory over sin and Satan at the cross when His blood was spilled. He laid down His life willingly. In Romans Paul says that Jesus’ death on the cross appeased an angry God. Just as the lamb without spot or blemish in the O.T. was offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the people and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat; so too the Lamb of Glory, Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross satisfied God’s holy demands that sin be paid for. Because of what Jesus did, we can have real victory over sin, death, hell and the grave.

His name is called “The Word of God” (v 13). John has used this name for Jesus before in the Gospel of John. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We know that this refers to Jesus because later John writes, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1,14)

“The armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses” (v 14). This refers to the church. This is you and me. It’s an awesome thought to think about, but when Jesus leads the armies of heaven back to earth, we who are saved will be part of it all!

We’re reminded of the carnage that will take place at the Battle of Armageddon (v 15). We caught a glimpse of this back in Ch 14 with the harvest of the earth, the angel with the sickle and the blood flowing from the winepress 4 feet deep for 200 miles!

And of course that glorious verse where we see Jesus Christ is KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

The choice belongs to us. We can either submit to the lordship of Jesus voluntarily now in this the age of grace or we will be forced to submit to Him at the end of history.

Well, now comes the battle itself. The Battle of Armageddon is discussed a lot and is thought of as this major confrontation between good and evil at the end times. I hate to disappoint you but it really is not much of a battle at all. In fact, it is pretty one-sided. An angel, God’s messenger, gives pre-battle instructions to the birds…

V 17-18: Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.”

The angel tells the birds, “Get ready for there are going to be the bodies of men and horses for you to devour.”

And with that, the “battle” (if you want to call it that) begins…

V 19: And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

We saw back in Rev 16:16 where the armies of the world were gathering together at Armageddon. Here we see them, weapons drawn and poised for battle against Jesus and His saints. It’s quite a scene. The armies of Satan and the antichrist stand on one side of the Jezreel Valley. Jesus Christ and His saints are on the other side. But notice what happens…

V 20: And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

The Unholy Trinity, Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet, lead the armies of the world against God. Two of the three, the antichrist and the false prophet, are seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire. They don’t put up much resistance do they? With them destroyed that leaves only Satan and his followers standing.

V 21: And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

Jesus speaks the word and they are all die. That’s it. That’s the Battle of Armageddon that you hear so much about. The carnage is described much more graphically in Chapter 14 and the birds enjoy a feast. This is God’s judgment upon sin. A loving and just God possesses the qualities of mercy and love as well as wrath and judgment, all expressed in a divine balance.

Well, that leaves only Satan and God will deal with him next.

When the Battle of Armageddon takes place and the armies of the world line up on one side and the armies of God line up on the other, where will you be? When the millennial kingdom, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, starts in Chapter 20, where will you be? When Jesus comes back and He judges those who were dead in the second resurrection, where will you be? When the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven in Chapter 21, where will you be? History is going somewhere. God is in control and He is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself even now. History is NOT out of control. I can assure you from God’s Holy Word that it is right on course. There’s a remnant called the church that He is calling to Himself. That’s what the Book of Revelation reveals to us. That really is thehe whole point of us studying this book. Not to get bogged down in the details of how it’s all going to end. If that is all you are interested in, you have completely missed the point. Revelation has a clear message. If you are a child of God, then examine yourself. What are you doing to bring people into the kingdom? But if you are lost and don’t know Christ as personal Savior, then take stock. You don’t have as much time as you think. Now is the time to get right with God. Today is the day of grace.

Well, we are not done. We still have 3 more chapters to cover. Come back next week and we will pick it up in Ch 20, the thousand year reign of Jesus on the earth.