

**A Marriage Made in Heaven • Revelation 19:1-10 • By Dr. David O. Dykes.**  
**Part 25 Revelation: Unveiling the Truth**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Book of Revelation is divided into three simple parts. 1) Jesus said to John, write the things which you have seen. That was the vision of Jesus in chapter one. 2) He said, write the things which are, that was the letters to the seven churches, because those churches are today in 1994 as they were in the time of John. 3) And then he said, write the things which shall be. That's from chapter four, all the way to the end of the book.

But from chapter six, all the way through chapter 18, we focus on that time of terrible tribulation, where the wrath of God has been poured out upon the earth. The seven seals were broken, the seven trumpets were blown, the seven bowls of wrath were poured out. It's part of the word of God, but I don't really enjoy preaching on the wrath of God. From this point forward in Revelation, the focus is no longer upon the judgment that takes place on earth but on what's taking place heaven where you and I are.

The original heavenly marriage is described in Revelation 19:1-10. "After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.' And again they shouted: 'Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.' The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: 'Amen, Hallelujah!'

Then a voice came from the throne, saying: 'Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small!' Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: 'Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.) [Literally it is the word "righteousness" in plural. If there is such a thing as righteousnesses, it is the righteous acts of the saints.] Then the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, 'These are the true words of God.' At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and

sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.”

I want us to notice three things about this marriage made in heaven.

## **I. THE WORSHIP IN HEAVEN (19:1-3)**

This is a tremendous scene of worship in heaven. Worshiping God is going to be our full-time occupation. And I wonder if some of you think, as you see on some of the Hollywood movies, that when you get up to heaven, there's going to be a holding room before you enter heaven. You've heard jokes about meeting Saint Peter at the pearly gates and having to go through some kind of trial or orientation to get in. But the Bible speaks nothing about that. It's the wrong idea to think that when we get to heaven, we're going to spend a couple of years in Worship 101 and Worship 102 to learn how to worship so that then we can then get around the throne and worship the way the Bible describes. That's not the case. Right now on earth we are preparing ourselves to worship God in heaven for all eternity. What makes you think, if you don't worship him now, that suddenly you'll be transformed and worship him there? We need to be worshipping the Lord right here and now, so we'll be ready to worship him there.

What are they worshipping in this passage? They're giving praise for two characteristics of God that are mentioned in verses one through three.

### **1. Praise God for his salvation (19:1)**

First of all, they are praising God for his salvation. There is a great chorus in heaven who says, “Hallelujah!” This is the real Hallelujah Chorus. George Frederick Handel composed the entire *Messiah* in only 21 days. But most of us have never heard the entire *Messiah* because it is a massive composition. We usually just hear certain pieces of it. And it really was an inspiration from God for George Frederick Handel to write the *Messiah* so fast. He hardly ate. He hardly slept. He composed nonstop. During that time, God the Holy Spirit seemed to pour this beautiful composition through him. It was performed for the first time on March the 23rd, 1743, in the presence of the king of England. The king was seated during the whole first part of it. But when he came to the climax and the Hallelujah Chorus, the king of England was so moved by those words (that come right out of this passage of scripture), that he stood to his feet.

And when the king stood to his feet, everybody else stood to their feet. And so that is why to this day, when the Hallelujah Chorus is sung, people stand. But this heavenly chorus in Revelation is not in honor of George Frederick Handel. It's not in honor of the king of England. It is in honor of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. In heaven, their chorus is as stirring as the Hallelujah Chorus is on earth.

Can you imagine what it's going to be like in heaven when the real King of Kings and Lord of Lords is the one who's receiving this praise? We will be praising God for salvation and saying, "Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul." On that day you'll get to tell him personally that message.

## **2. Praise God for his supremacy (19:2-3)**

Verse one says salvation and glory and power belong to our God. And then in verse two, it speaks of God's supremacy. It says he has condemned the great prostitute. Now, what is the great prostitute? That's the Babylonian system, the world's system. In the end, God wins. A lot of people have a faulty theology. They have what I call a Star Wars theology. Do you remember the *Star Wars* movie? There was the good side of the Force, and there was the dark side of the Force. These two sides of the Force were fighting, and it was undecided who was going to win in the end. But finally, the good side of the Force barely wins.

Some of us have the idea that there's a cosmic struggle going on between God and Satan. And it's a real close match, as if it's tied with two minutes left. But it's nothing like that. It's not even close and doesn't go into double overtime. Jesus got the devil on Calvary. He won it, and it wasn't even close. It's not a question of how close Satan ever came to winning. All throughout the Bible, God's word promised that God would be victorious in the end.

In Genesis chapter three, God predicted what would happen. He said Eve's seed, which was a prophecy of Jesus, is going to crush the head of the serpent. And there are many people today who go around moaning about the devil. But you don't need to fear the devil. He is like a roaring lion, but ever since Calvary, he's been a toothless and clawless lion. All he has left is his roar, but he cannot harm you in the end.

I used to read Joe and Frank Hardy novels, *The Hardy Boys Mysteries*, when I was a kid. I stayed up late reading, but my mother would tell me to turn out the light and go to sleep. But Joe and Frank Hardy would be tied down to some conveyor belt with a buzzsaw about to kill them! And I would say, "Mom, I can't stop now." But she made me! And so I would flip over to the last page and there it would say that Frank and Joe Hardy "sat down to a nice dinner with their family." I didn't know how it was going to happen, but I could close the book and sleep, confident that in the end everything was going to be okay. Regardless of all the trials and struggles that you go through, we ought to look on the last page of the Bible and realize that God has already won from the beginning.

## **II. THE WORSHIPPERS IN HEAVEN (19:4-6)**

Who are those worshipping at this scene? Look at verses four through six; they're basically two groups. One is the 24 elders. Now we were introduced to the 24 elders earlier in Revelation. Billy Graham and others believe that the 24 elders represent the saints, all the redeemed of all the ages gathered around the throne. The four living creatures, the other group, surround the throne of God, constantly doing his beck and call and worshipping him for all eternity.

What are we going to be doing? There are two words that we are going to be using. The two words that stand out, if you look at verse four, are the words “hallelujah” and “amen.” They are the same in every language on earth.

### **1. Hallelujah**

The word “hallelujah” appears 24 times in the Old Testament and four times in the New Testament—all in Revelation 19 (verse one, verse three, verse four, and verse six.) The word comes from two Hebrew words with a little article in between. “Halle” is Hebrew for “praise.” “Lu” is an article. “Jah” is the syllable used in the name God – Yahweh. It literally means, “Praise to the Lord.” And that's what we're going to be saying in heaven.

### **2. Amen**

And then we're going to say “Amen.” It appears in the form of “amen” several times in the Bible, but it is translated in another form over 200 times in the New Testament. When you read in the King James Version “verily, verily...” it also means Amen. The New International Version says it this way, “The truth I say unto you...” “Amen” means “That’s right. I agree.” When you say it to a preacher when he’s preaching, it’s like saying “sic ‘em” to a dog. It's like pouring gasoline on a fire.

In 1869 to celebrate the end of the Civil War, Dr. Dewitt Talmudge (a pastor in Boston) wrote about the Peace Jubilee. There was a 10,000-voice choir and a 1000-piece orchestra, which included 70 anvils for something called the Anvil Anthem. They even had the percussion section timed with artillery that would go off in time with the music! He says the music was unequaled on earth when a Ms. Rose sang a high C note with full orchestra, bells, the cannons, and the anvils. Her note was so loud and clear that it seemed to bury all the accompaniment. All unamplified! He writes, “I'm an old man now, but I am looking forward to the music of heaven where there will be music infinitely superior to the marvelous music I heard that day.”

Even that is nothing compared to the worship that's going to take place in heaven. Verse six says it sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters. It’s like a hundred Niagara Falls. It was so loud, like loud peals of thunder, as this

multitude is shouting, "Hallelujah! For our Lord God almighty reigns!" I can hardly wait. How about you?

### **III. THE WEDDING IN HEAVEN (19:7-10)**

The whole purpose of all this worship and celebration is the celebration of a wedding in verse seven. It's going to be a marriage made in heaven, and you and I are not only going to be there, but we will be part of the wedding. The focus of a wedding on earth is the bride. What's going to be different about this wedding in heaven is that the focus is on the bridegroom, Jesus (Matthew 25). When asked why he and his disciples didn't fast, Jesus said, "While the bridegroom is here, there won't be any fasting. But after the bridegroom has gone, then they will fast." He is the bridegroom in this wedding scene.

#### **1. The bride is the Church**

In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul says, "I'm jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you [the word literally means I "espoused" you] to one husband, to Christ. [He's talking about the Church] so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him." The Church is the bride of Christ. And that's what it says in this passage of scripture in Revelation. If you look at verse seven, it says the bride has "made herself ready."

Now let me explain to you a traditional Jewish wedding. First, the engagement is not between the husband and wife but between the parents. The father of the bride and the father of the groom get together to make a financial arrangement. The father of the groom pays a dowry (money) to the father of the bride so that when the time comes, his daughter can be the wife of his son. The unique component of a Jewish wedding versus a Western wedding is the betrothal stage when the couple is espoused. Espousal is not like being engaged. It's equal to being legally married, like Joseph and Mary were before Mary gave birth to Jesus. If the couple wants to break the betrothal, it requires a divorce just like a marriage. They do not live together, and the marriage is not physically consummated. It is an in-between time, a time of anticipation, a time of waiting before the third step: the wedding celebration.

After the betrothal, the groom would go back to his father's house to prepare a place for he and his bride to live. And then when he got it ready, he would come back to get his bride. It almost became a game among Jewish young people for the groom to sneak up on the bride to surprise her and take her when she wasn't expecting it. So the bride had to stay ready all the time, and her "bridesmaids" (the maidens in Matthew 25) would help her be ready. Then the groomsmen would one day announce, "Behold! The bridegroom comes!" And then he would sweep up his

bride and take her back with him to his father's house where the wedding celebration would begin.

There's a tremendous spiritual truth below the surface. And here it is: from the foundation of the world, our heavenly Father paid the price for our souls with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. That's what Paul says in Acts chapter 20. Jesus bought the Church with his own blood. From the time of Calvary to now, we, the Church, the Bride of Christ, are betrothed to Christ. We are espoused to the Lord. Paul says, "I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I espoused you. I have promised you to one husband to Christ so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him." That's what Matthew 25 is all about. The Bible says that when Jesus comes back, there's going to be a shout of the Archangel. What is that Archangel going to shout? I don't know for sure, but don't be a bit surprised if it's, "Behold! The bridegroom comes for his Bride, the Church!" This event is what we call the rapture of the Church.

What has Jesus been doing all this time that he's been ascended back into heaven? The same thing a groom does. He says, "In my father's house are many mansions. I have gone to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, dear bride, and receive you unto myself. That where I am, there you may be also." It's beautiful that right now we are the Bride of Christ, waiting for him to come for us.

But the thing is, the bride is not ready now. The bride is not in pure and spotless linen right now. Why is that? The Church is not perfect. The Church has problems, and he must clean us up. What's going to be happening for the seven years of tribulation? Jesus is going to be getting the Church cleaned up. That's the Judgment Seat of Christ we read about in 1 Corinthians 3. The Bible says that that our works will be judged and tried by fire like gold, silver, and precious stone. All of that will be refined and cleaned up. He'll be getting the bride ready. Those seven years of heavenly preparation are how Jesus purifies his Church, his bride, with "fine linen" given to her to wear.

The linen is the righteous acts of the saints. The next two chapters of Revelation reveal that this is basically an outer garment. There is an inner garment of righteousness, which is the righteousness of Jesus. That is our true righteousness, but this outer garment is our practical righteousness—those righteous acts we have committed for the Lord with the right motive and for the right reason. That's the linen we're going to be wearing. And so the bride will have made herself ready this way.

## **2. The banquet is for celebration**

New Testament believers will be the bride, but there will be other people invited to the wedding feast. In fact, Jesus said about John the Baptist that he was a friend of the bridegroom. I don't believe Abraham will be part of the "bride." I don't think Jacob or Moses will be a part of the bride. I think they will be at the wedding feast as friends of the bridegroom.

In an American wedding, the father of the bride presents the bride to the groom. But since God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one and the same, Jesus is going to present the bride to himself. Ephesians 5:25-27 compares the Church to a husband and wife. "Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water, through the word and to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or blemish but holy and blameless." By the time of Revelation 19, Jesus will present the Church to himself as a beautiful and spotless bride without blemish. What a time of celebration there's going to be.

Verse 9 says "blessed" are they who are invited to the wedding supper. I don't know what's going to be on the menu, but I do know there will be "new wine." Jesus said to the disciples, "I will not drink this fruit of the vine with you until I drink it new with you in the kingdom."

## **CONCLUSION**

C.S. Lewis talked about a vision of hell where people were seated at a banquet table with piles of food on the table. Their arms and hands were tied to each other, but everyone was so selfish that no one tried to feed the other. They all tried to feed themselves and consequently, no one was eating. Hell was an eternity of frustration and selfishness. And then he said he dreamed about a banquet table in heaven piled high with food. Here, everyone had a long fork, too long to feed themselves. But it was so wonderful because everybody was using their fork to feed the person across the table. And that's basically the difference between those who are going to be in heaven and hell, those who are selfish and those who are unselfish.

As John sees this vision of this wedding and heaven, he falls down at the feet of this angel and begins to worship the angel. The angel says not to do it! Verse 10 says, "Worship God only." And then the angel notes one of the keys to the whole Book of Revelation. He says the testimony of Jesus is the "spirit of prophecy." Revelation is all about prophecy, and there are a lot of people who are really into prophecy. But if you get anything out of prophecy, except the preaching and testimony of Jesus Christ, you have missed the message of the whole revelation.

This book is not the revelation of the future. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ. As you read this book, if you don't fall more in love with Jesus, you need to read it again because you missed the whole point of it.

## OUTLINE

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- 1. Praise God for his salvation (19:1)**
- 2. Praise God for his supremacy (19:2-3)**

### **II. THE WORSHIPPERS IN HEAVEN (19:4-6)**

- 1. Hallelujah**
- 2. Amen**

### **III. THE WEDDING IN HEAVEN (19:7-10)**

- 1. The bride is the Church**
- 2. The banquet is for celebration**