

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #57
11/7/2007

The Celebration In Heaven In Anticipation of Christ's Victorious Return
19:1-6

“And after these things” opens the nineteenth chapter. It is a phrase God has used in the Revelation of Jesus Christ to signify an important change in topic and presentation. God first used it in 1:19 where it is translated with the following phrase, **“the things which shall be hereafter,”** in His instructions to John in how this Revelation was to be organized. God told John that there were to be three divisions: Things pertaining to John’s 1) past, 2) present, and 3) future. God used the phrase again in 4:1 to indicate the conclusion of matters pertaining to both the past and present and the introduction of future matters. Between that usage in 4:1 and the occurrence here in 19:1, God has used it several times to signal a change in either topic or time or both (7:1,9; 15:5; 18:1). Here, it signifies a dramatic topical change; therefore, we should be alert to the presentation of some drastically different scenes.

John begins describing what is introduced by **“meta tauta”** by saying **“I heard a great voice of much people in heaven.”** We are about to read John’s description of a scene that is so fantastic that it is a challenge to John to present and to us to comprehend. It is the most glorious praise service ever offered to our holy Creator by His creation.

First, we focus on the participants in this service of praise to God. While the KJV says, **“much people,”** the proper translation of the Greek words **megas oxlos** is **“great multitude.”** This distinction is important. If the KJV is correct then we are reading about some people who once lived on this earth and are now in heaven. However, since the proper translation is **“great multitude,”** this expression could also be a reference to angelic beings since verse four specifically identifies **“the four and twenty elders”** as representative of resurrected saints. However, it is also possible that it is used to signify a **“great multitude”** of resurrected saints who are martyred during the Tribulation Period since the same expression is used that way in 7:9.

If this **“great multitude”** is composed of angels, then they would have been watching the rebellion of sinful man over the centuries, would have seen Satan seduce millions of people into following him in his uprising against the Creator and would have witnessed his futile attempts to assault and overthrow the throne of Almighty God (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Revelation 12:3-4). Both the angels and the martyred saints are aware of the great number of times, as recorded in the Old Testament, in which God spoke about the coming of the Messiah, both His first appearance to atone for man’s sin and His second and victorious coming to conquer and vanquish His enemies. Both angels and resurrected, martyred saints have known of, anticipated and patiently waited for this time. It is now at hand and their joy erupts like a volcano in a crescendo of unprecedented praise.

Revelation 19:1-6

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

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.

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 thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

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Second, we turn our thoughts to their expressions of praise and worship. In doing so, we find a very special relationship exists between this praise service and the Old Testament. **“Alleluia,”** an Old Testament word, emphasizes this special relationship between the seven-year **Tribulation Period** and the Old Testament so we should study it to understand its role here. In studying this word we find three important factors indicating how it relates this passage to the Old Testament.

First, we discover that the roots of “Alleluia” are found in the Old Testament. **“Alleluia”** is a transliteration of the two Hebrew words **hawlal** (1984) and **yah**, a shortened form of **Yahweh**, (3050) which are usually translated **“Praise the Lord”** in the O.T. Though, here in Revelation 19, is the first and only time **“alleluia”** is used in the New Testament. The combination of the two words, **hawlal yah**, appears 165 times in the O.T., mostly in the Psalms. There it is often used as an imperative from King David commanding his people to give their God and Creator the honor and glory He deserves. Recognizing this, we realize that God, by emphasizing this special relationship, is telling us that **“the time of Jacob's trouble”** (Jeremiah 30:7), which is the same as the **Tribulation Period**, is coming to an end and is concluded with this heavenly celebration.

Second, the appearance of “alleluia” here in Revelation nineteen is significant because it celebrates the fulfillment of what had been anticipated in Psalms. In the Psalms David prophetically praised God for His ultimate judgment and victory over Satan and evil. Here, the chorus in heaven, is praising God for His accomplished judgment and victory. This can be seen more clearly when one goes back to Psalms and reads of David anticipation of God's judgment:

The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD (Psalm 146:9-10).

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD (Psalm 149:6-9).

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Third, in the Psalms where “Praise the Lord” is used, we find an interesting relationship between what He was praised for there and what He is praised for in Revelation. While the Palmist praises the Lord for many things, it is notable that, in a number of places, the phrase hawlal yah is used to praise the Lord for being the Creator. This reminds us of the first worship service in heaven which God described in Revelation 4:9-11. It was only after Jesus was recognized and worshipped as Creator of all of creation, which implies His ownership and authority over all that He has created, that we begin to read of His judgment of His creation. As Creator, He held His creation accountable to Him and exercised His rightful authority to judge it. Thus, after He is worshipped as Creator, He is seen opening the seals on **“the book”** which is the title deed to all of Creation. The opening of those seals began His time of judging His creation and that judgment covers the seven-years between the worship service in Revelation four and the celebration we are reading about in Revelation nineteen. Thus, the use of the word **“alleluia”** in 19:1, is an expression of praise for Jesus as Creator as well as an expression of joy celebrating His judgment of His rebellious creation. The role of **“alleluia”** in Revelation to connect Jesus' role as Creator to His role as Judge is thus somewhat similar to how it is used in Psalms. This can be seen in the following verses:

Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses (Psa. 33:2,6,7).

Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures (Psa. 135:1,7).

Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever (Psa. 146:1,6).

Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass (Psa. 148:1-6).

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The **“alleluia”** introduces a crescendo of praise containing attributes which belong only to our Lord and actions which can come only from Him: **“Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.”** No one else can provide **“Salvation”** to rebellious and sinful man and no one else rightly deserves **“glory, and honour, and power.”** They belong to Him alone!

Twice before we have seen similar expressions of praise. An innumerable number of angels praise Him with similar expressions just before He begins to open the seals on the title deed to His creation: **“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”** (Rev. 5:12). Then the saints who had given their lives in His service during the **Tribulation Period** and been resurrected into His presence are seen praising Him in Revelation 7:12 with the following accolade of praise: **“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”** However, where the previous expressions of praise were brief, this service of praise continues for it is the climatic expression of praise that has been long due our Creator, God and Lord. Having been introduced with a **“alleluia,”** we find it repeated three more times, each of them adding emphasis to His worthiness for Who He is and what He has done:

For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath 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 thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The first time, is the praise for the judgment of **“the great whore,”** all false religion, which corrupted the whole earth and murdered the servants of God. Then, there is the call for all of creation to praise Him. Finally, there is **“the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings”** praising Him for being **“the Lord God omnipotent”** and for asserting His reign over all of creation.

As we said at the beginning of this lesson, the whole worship service is so magnificent and heavenly that any further attempt to describe it is beyond this teacher's ability.