

**Text: Revelation 19:1-10**

**Title: “Worship Unveiled ... Worship God!”**

Let's open our Bibles to Revelation 19:1. In what is called the Lord's Prayer Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed by Your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” So we have a Father who is on the throne of heaven. There He is perfectly and appropriately revered and worshipped for who He is. So we should want His kingdom, His rule (perfectly displayed in heaven) to come to this earth. We should want His will as it is being perfectly carried out in heaven to be carried out here on earth. So the efforts to worship and hallow the name of God here on earth should mirror the way it is done in heaven. Thankfully we know what that heavenly worship looks like because God gave a vision to the Apostle John which we have recorded in the Revelation. **Read Revelation 19:1-10.**

This is amazing. God enables John to see this awe-inspiring vision of what happens to what is called the “great prostitute” and the tremendous response that happens in heaven. And when the angel tells John to write something, John does something really strange ... he falls down at the feet of the angel and worships him. So John offers to someone worship that should only rightfully be offered to God. And the angel says, “No, no, don't do that. I'm just the messenger. Worship God!” Oh how we are tempted to do the same! It's so easy for us to get let our hearts be drawn where they shouldn't be drawn.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Do you ever watch the videos on YouTube where shows a service man or woman returning from Iraq or Afghanistan when they are reunited with their family? I cry every time. But what if, when the husband or wife got off the military transport, the family ran past their loved one and went to hug the pilot of the airplane. Of course it doesn't work that way.

Our hearts can so easily be drawn away to lesser things. We must worship God ... focus on Him, and what is true about Him, not on the music or person or whatever is pointing us to God. Don't let your feelings be stirred by anything or anyone less than God Himself ... to love and revere and treasure Him. Let's make sure we're not worshipping worship. Let's don't worship the stage or anyone or anything on the stage. Worship God.

Now, in a world that has neglected and worse, rejected God, we exist to glorify God in our worship. What we will see happening as history marches along toward the day that Christ returns is that our world will become increasingly anti-God. In fact, Revelation describes the emergence of a world leader called the Beast. In other parts of the Bible he's called the Antichrist. His main agenda is to dethrone God and His Christ and to claim the worship of all people. This world leader has a “government,” if you will, and a capital city called in Revelation by the name Babylon, or the Great Prostitute, as it is called here in Revelation 19. This city is like a prostitute in that it has enticed the hearts of people to turn away from the true love and worship of God for the cheap love of the things of this world. People of the world will be forced to bow and worship the Antichrist. And all of this is inspired by God's archenemy Satan, who is called the dragon in Revelation:

**Revelation 13:4 - Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can make war against him?”**

**Revelation 13:8 - All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.**

So true believers will never bow to that temptation and they will be slaughtered by the rule of Babylon. In fact, Revelation says that this world government will become drunk on the blood of believers killed because they refuse to worship the Antichrist. The whole purpose is to draw worship away from God.

So Travis Avenue Church, do you understand that we are an outpost in a land occupied by the Enemy. We are an outpost in Babylon ... in a world that will increasingly call us to worship things and people we are not meant to worship. We are to continuously insist on God’s rightful place in every area of life. We worship God, and we call others to do the same through Jesus Christ.

**QUOTE:** John Piper says it this way: “Corporate worship is the public savoring of the worth of God and the beauty of God and power of God and the wisdom of God. And therefore worship is an open declaration to all the powers of heaven and to all of Babylon that we will not prostitute our minds or our hearts or our bodies to the allurements of the world. Though we may live in Babylon, we will not be captive to Babylonian ways. And we will celebrate with all our might the awesome truth that we are free from that which will be destroyed.” That’s what I long for!

You see, God is jealous for the glory of His name. He created the earth and all its inhabitants to glorify His Name. Because He is a holy God who always does what is right, He will ultimately crush everything that stands against His glory. So in Revelation 18 God quickly and instantly destroys Babylon. He crushes the false worship demanded by the Antichrist. No person or city or worldview will be permitted to stand in opposition to the worship of God. And with the sudden destruction of Babylon there is an explosion of what I will call “hallelujah worship” in heaven. God has accomplished a massive victory.

**Revelation 19:1 - 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,**

Four times in this passage we see the word “Hallelujah!” As popular as that word is, the word “hallelujah” only appears here in these verses of Revelation and nowhere else in our English Bibles. Now the word is a Hebrew word that is translated in our English Bibles as “praise God.” *Hallel* means praise. *Yah* means God. “Praise God,” as we frequently see in the psalms.

What is it that moves heaven to this kind of worship? It is the character and the deeds of God. For us to worship God the way heaven worships God, we must see Him the way they see him.

Last week I said that the greater and bigger our vision of God the better will be our worship. God is jealous for the worship of His people. What inspires the hallelujahs of heaven? First there is ...

## **1. THE POWERFUL SALVATION OF GOD**

When God destroys Babylon there a mighty roar of praise coming from the great multitude in heaven...

**Revelation 19:1 - "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,**

God embarked on the greatest rescue mission of history. He looked down on a universe tainted by sin, on a world infected with sin, and on lives ruined by sin. He looked down, then He stepped down into our sinful mess and by the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ He accomplished our salvation. And it's not just our personal salvation (and that is wonderfully true), but also the reclaiming the universe. A it's not just the forgiveness of our sins now, but the promise that we will one day live in a completely redeemed universe where everything and everyone does what God created them to do from the beginning ... to worship Him.

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. He is the only one who can exert His might power to redeem sinful humans for His eternal glory. Worship God! Also, the great worship of heaven is inspired by...

## **2. THE PERFECT JUSTICE OF GOD**

Remember what John first saw in His vision. This world system, embodied in a blasphemous city, is crushed by the power of God.

**Revelation 19:2-3 - 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."**

So heaven worships God for his perfect justice that is poured out on this "prostitute" who enticed people to false worship. Now God had already sent a warning earlier of what was about to come. Through the period known as the Great Tribulation God sends judgment on His enemies:

**Revelation 16:2 - The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his image.**

But people refuse to repent. So God ultimately sends His swift and final judgement by destroying this city and the empire it represents. And Revelation 19:3 tells us that heaven

worships God because his judgment is everlasting: “The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.” The evil rebellion that strives to hijack the worship of God will be destroyed and never rise again.

You see, God is a God of absolute truth so His justice is always perfect. He would not be a God of truth if He had to power to destroy evil and He didn't. But look at where that leaves you and me. I am a sinner. I deserve the same fate as the wicked city. But God is not just a God of truth and justice, but also of love and mercy. So God took the judgment I deserved and heaped it on His sinless Son who didn't deserve it. And I am delivered.

So heaven sees the absolutely perfect justice of God performed and worships God. But heaven also rejoices in...

### **3. THE MIGHTY SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

**Read Revelation 19:4 - 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!”**

There God is, seated on His throne ... the sovereign of the universe.

**Revelation 19:5-6 - Then a voice came from the throne, saying: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!” 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.**

Lord ... God ... Almighty. Not some-mighty but Almighty. He is the unrivaled Ruler of all things. He reigns. And this is where all worship starts. I said earlier that we are an outpost of God-worshippers in enemy territory. How do we keep joyfully singing His praises and glory when everywhere we turn it looks like evil is winning and the Enemy is enticing hearts everywhere to turn away from God? We do it because we know that our Lord God Almighty reigns. And one day that will be seen in every square inch of the universe. In the meantime we sometimes have to drag ourselves to church, not because we feel like coming, but often because we must worship God. Congregational worship is intended to point us to a Sovereign God who not only forgives us, but who also rules our world for our good and His glory. Worship God!

But then there's something else that causes heaven to explode with hallelujah ...

### **4. THE ULTIMATE UNION OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH**

**Revelation 19:7-8 - 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 the saints.)**

**ILLUSTRATION** – Now whether you're married or not, whether you've had a wedding in your family or not, I think we all understand that there is no happier human occasion than a wedding. I know they're usually very stressful for the family, but in spite of that there's something about seeing your son or your daughter, or someone else's son or daughter look into another's eyes and commit themselves to live and love together for a lifetime. You know it's what they dreamed about for years ... to be united with the person God has given them as a mate. And we're often moved with tears of joy.

But that's just a tiny, fleeting taste of the magnificent joy that awaits God's people at what is called here "the wedding of the Lamb." Now what does that mean? You see, God has arranged all along for the union of his Son Jesus Christ to His Church. We are the bride, He is our Bridegroom. We have been purified and beautified by what He did for us on the Cross. By faith in Christ, the bride has made herself ready. We are clothed in His righteousness, like a bride clothed in a wedding gown made by another.

Now those of us who are saved know Christ now. We have become one with Him ... He is in us and we are in Him. We know the joy of knowing Him today. We can walk with Him and talk with Him. But as sweet as that is, it's nothing compared to the union that will happen one day we actually enter His presence in heaven. For thousands of years God has been planning this wedding ... this ultimate union of His Son and His people in glory forever and ever.

Now, we are like an engaged couple. We look into the eyes of Jesus. We know and feel His love, but we also know there's something not yet finished ... our union isn't perfect yet. But a day is coming when we will be united with Him. We will love and adore Him. We will know His embrace. But for now, we wait by faith for that day. And we worship God!