

Study 38: Revelation 19:1-8

- 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,**
- 2 **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."**

- It has been a few chapters since we have been reminded how loud heaven can be. It is impossible **not** to hear what heaven is doing and saying. You can ignore it, but you can't miss it. When Jesus was born, heaven spoke loudly and clearly. A star appeared for the magi and the angels came to visit the shepherds.
- What is God saying to you? I'm not asking you whether you hear His voice, but rather to identify the main theme of what the Holy Spirit is doing in your life. You should always be able to identify that without a problem. And have you figured out yet how God speaks to you? Does He use circumstances, other people or any other predictable pattern?
- Guidance is not (or should not be) a problem for the believer. If you commit to do God's will **before** you know what it is (surrendering the power to veto or ignore it), then you **will** know what God wants you to do (see John 7:17). How can God expect you to **do** His will if He doesn't tell you what that will **is**?
- God is a great communicator. He speaks every language and isn't limited to spoken words to get His message across. What is He saying to you?
- Listen carefully if for nothing else than God speaking through His word:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe (Hebrews 1:1-2).

- God is speaking from heaven through Jesus! He is the focus of the Church. This is why it isn't important who wrote Revelation. The author is not the focus; Jesus is the focus. We concentrate on too many side issues sometimes. It's all about Him!
- When God acts on behalf of His people, the end result is not deliverance. The end result is worship! The multitudes in heaven, who are watching redemption history unfold, can only watch, marvel and worship as they see the power and majesty of God. And God doesn't judge the great prostitute out of anything but His righteousness. His judgments are just and true.

3 And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

- The inhabitants of heaven *shouted*, "Hallelujah!" God obviously isn't intimidated or upset by loud sounds of worship. Are you?
- This scenario reminds me of Israel as they watched Pharaoh's army destroyed at the Red Sea. Their only legitimate response was worship. The "smoke" from what God did there has gone up for all generations to learn from. Yet God always has enemies who array in battle formation against the Lord, His anointed and His Church. Their end is always the same.

Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone. "Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy. In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble. By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood firm like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea. "The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.' But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you-- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? You stretched out your right hand and the earth swallowed them. "In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia (Exodus 15:4-14)

- If you are currently in a difficult place, be encouraged. It's not that God *can't* deliver you; it's that He is doing something else in your life, building something inside you. He is using your enemies to develop you and conform you to the image of Christ! Rejoice! When you no longer need your enemies, God will remove them. You will go looking for them but will be unable to find them.

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!"

- The book of Psalms is at the center of the Bible. The psalms teach us many things, but especially how to worship. The proper response to who God is and what He does is to worship Him. Worship is truly the central theme of the Bible and Jesus is the central focus.

- We have not seen the elders or living creatures since chapter 14. Yet they have been there all along, watching the work of God unfold on the earth. I am reminded of another passage in Hebrews:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1-2).

- It seems that the citizens and creatures of heaven have the ability to see what is happening on earth. Perhaps they are cheering us on! If nothing else, their memory and legacy of faith toward God spur us on to serve Him in our own generation. We are not alone, and I'm not talking about aliens from another planet. We are part of a spiritual family that has served God through the ages.

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"

- We are **commanded** to praise and worship. Praise is not a matter of how we feel or how well our circumstances are going. Our feelings and circumstances change, but God never does. If our focus is on Him, we will worship because He is worthy of worship.
- What is heaven saying today? Heaven is telling us to worship Him. That is a good idea for today. Worship is not only a public, congregational exercise. You can and should praise and worship as an individual or as families.

6 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.

7 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.

- Here is another loud noise from heaven. I imagine that heaven is no place for the nervous! It is a loud place.
- There are things that only God can do for us and then there are things that only we can do for Him. Our preparations are likened to a bride preparing for her bridegroom. A wedding is such a festive occasion. Everyone looks their best and under normal circumstances acts their best. The bride works hard to look her very best on that day.
- The church must work hard to prepare herself as well. How? The next verse tells us.

8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

- The Church and her members can prepare herself by wearing fine linen provided for her.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:8-10).

- Salvation is a gift of God, given to all those who believe on Him and trust in His name. Then He expects us to do good works, but He provides the good works for us to do. He provides the garments, so to speak, but expects us to put them on.
- We do not have to work to find the "works" to perform, but we must work to accomplish and complete the "works" He gives us. Paul described some of these good works for widows when he wrote:

No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds (1 Timothy 5:9-10).

- These good works are practical and aimed at relieving the suffering or lack that others are experiencing. We are to be mindful that God will present these opportunities to us. A study of Revelation should not make us weird, trying to identify who the antichrist is; a study of the Bible should lead us to good works. These works do not *earn* our salvation, they *prove* the validity of our salvation.
- The rich are also commanded to do "good deeds."

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share (1 Timothy 6:17-18).

- A knowledge of the Bible is not to make us smart (and often the more Bible someone knows, the meaner they can be!), but to prepare us for good works:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- Can you find any other references or examples of good works in the Bible? What are they?
- Are you doing good works? Are you dressing yourself as a bride for her husband? We need to be aware that God is bringing these good works to us. He has actually prepared them beforehand for us to accomplish. We need to be watching for them and then be ready to do something about them. Are you ready?
- We of all people should be generous and gracious for we know that God is in control. We worship Him, acknowledging what He has done for us, when we do the things He sets before us to do. Again we see how practical Revelation is. It doesn't take us in a "higher knowledge" of who God is and what He is doing. It grounds us in the life we now live that is to be both practical and sane.
- Dear reader, I pray that you will clothe yourself in the good deeds that God has for you. This study is not intended to make you more intelligent, but to make you more like Him. Amen!