***The Sacrifice of Praise

RV226-02***

Please turn to Revelation 19. Our subject is "Praise the Lord," segment number two.

**"Hallelujah"**

Following the destruction of the city of Babylon, its religion of idolatry, and its governmental socialism. John suddenly hears a multitude of heavenly saints shouting "Hallelujah." "Hallelujah," as we pointed out, means "Praise the Lord." The saints in heaven are moved to express their deep thanksgiving to God in a united explosion of praise.

This was an event which at one time was centuries in the future. This is an event which now, I have no doubt personally, is a matter of a decade or so in the future. This is not a far-distant anymore. It is no longer something on a distant horizon. So, you are reading something that's pre-history, but very close to its fulfillment. I want to reiterate that because when we study prophecy, we always to think that it's something in the distant future. This is almost now.

These saints in heaven are moved to express their deep thanksgiving, and they have this united explosion of shouting "hallelujah" together. We have seen that God is praised for His provision of grace salvation; for the glory of His moral perfection; and, for His omnipotent power. Those three things specifically are pointed out: "Hallelujah, God. Praise the Lord because you saved us. We couldn't have done it ourselves. Hallelujah, God, because of your moral perfection; your infinite character; and, standard of righteousness. We are overwhelmed by the love of God." Then, "Hallelujah, God, because you can make it happen. You are omnipotent."

Indeed, those three things are worthy of praising God. These saints know that God is everything that Satan is not. Only God has the power to provide salvation for lost sinners, while at the same time, preserving His own holy integrity relative to their moral guilt. God does not wink at sin, He provides a way that satisfies His justice. The penalty of death is paid. The sin problem has been solved furthermore by God alone through the sacrifice of His son on the cross.

God is also praised, we have seen here, for exercising His vengeance against Babylon and all that Babylon has stood for. The judgments of God on Babylon are compatible with His veracity. Babylon is not falsely accused. It is a true indictment. The judgments of God are also governed by His standard of absolute righteousness, which Babylon has violated. Babylon is not treated unfairly.

So, the vengeance of God, as severe as it is to the total destruction of the city, is true on the one hand, and it is righteous so that justice is served. The crimes of Babylon, which merit God's vengeance are twofold. Babylon has led mankind into more corruption, and into violating the moral code of God; and secondly, Babylon's has murdered the servants of God who have witnessed to the living dead, and to the truthfulness of Scripture.

So, Babylon was a vile, religious, tyrannical, political system, which must be removed from the earth to make room for the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. In Revelation 19:3, we read of a second hallelujah: "And a second time, they said, 'Hallelujah.'" Once more, they come forth in this united praise of this heavenly multitude, shouting "Praise the Lord." This heavenly choir is an extreme contrast between the mourning and the sadness on earth of Babylon's followers, and here, the exuberant joy of God's people in heaven. They have shouted in praise of God's total destruction of Babylon the Great, because there comes a time when people get fed up with sin as much as God does. We have our fill with being the victims of crime; being the victims of oppression; and, being the victims of evil people, and it makes us kind of mad when we can't do anything about it. Here are these saints in heaven who have been victimized by the Babylon system, and all that has come from her in one way or another, and finally, she is getting the judgment she deserves, and they are shouting, "Praise God" for it.

The end of verse 3 says, "The smoke rises up forever and ever." The burning fire which God brings down upon Babylon is the picture here, and her smoke rising forever and ever. There is no end of that. There is no mercy now from God for the devotees of Babylon. They're had their good times on the earth, and the party's over. Now there is no mercy. Her smoke going up from her destruction is all that is to be seen.

This rising of the smoke is even in greater degree than just the fact that the city goes down in flames, and probably either gets covered over by the waters of the Persian Gulf as you tablelands sink; or, there's an earthquake, and the earth opens and gobbles up the whole city, but she is out of sight. So, she cannot be burning forever and ever literally. Certainly this would be an unfitting thing to have in the new earth.

So, the burning is even more serious than just the physical aspects of the city on the Euphrates. This eternal burning of Babylon is in terms of her followers who go into the lake of fire forever. The burning that began on them in Babylon now continue continues forever in the lake of fire. And the justice of God demands the casting into hell of all those who refuse to accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior. So, in that respect, all that constituted Babylon: its rulers; the antichrist; the false prophet; Satan himself; and, all the devotees who bore the mark of the beast upon them – that's the contingent that forms the group which is going to burn forever, and this will be in the lake of fire. Babylon has shown that she is just as vile as ancient Sodom, and she will share the same fate of total obliteration by burning: burning physically, until that's gone; then, burning forever in the eternity of the lake of fire.

Heaven rejoices in this act of justice of God on Babylon and on her followers. But the consequences to Babylon, of course are going to be tragic, and our hearts go out to all those throughout all the ages who end up in this terrible judgment of God, but this is something that they have brought upon themselves, and the justice of God carried through.

Mark 9:44 describes what they will facing in this way: "Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." The worms that are eating their bodies away never die under the burning of the fire, and they never die physically. They are alive, and the fire is not quenched. There never comes a time when they are no longer suffering. This is reiterated in Mark 9:46-48. It's a repeated emphasis here in this one chapter. Jesus says that if you get into the lake of fire, you're going to know it. The fire goes on forever, and the physical body never is destroyed.

Those in hell would like to get out. They would like to have a way out, but there is no way out. Luke 19:19-31 give us the story, which we won't look at rich now, but it is the story of Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man would have given anything he could to have gotten out of the burning of Hades, as he discovered that it was true, and that he was wrong. He had five brothers were just as wrong as he was, and he had a message to give.

I know a man in Chicago who died recently. He was a man who devoted his life to getting back, and he got it. As he came to the end of his life, he had nothing to live for. He was just a sad person. I don't know whether he's a Christian or not. He was a religious man. But I'm always inclined, when someone I know dies, to think: "What could they tell us now?" Wouldn't it be nice if we could have a phone line, and they could give us a message from the other side? What would they say? What would this man say? This man had everything in the world in the way of wealth, but he had little time for God. Maybe he was born-again. There's a good chance that he was. But there he is out in eternity, and he left his wealth to others to squander and to use, and he had taken nothing in terms of treasure to heaven with him. What messages could we receive from the other side?

This is just as sobering as the rich man wanted to give his five brothers. But there will never be a voice that comes from the unsaved who have died, because we already have the information. It's in the Bible. As the rich man was told, "We won't let anybody back to back to the living. They had the Word of God. All the information has already been recorded."

So, you see how important the Bible is. In a congregation like this, it is normal for you to come to church with your Bible. Only the abnormal ones who are here today do not have a Bible. All the normal people have a Bible in hand. That is just common place. That's how you do things. You come here for the Word of God. You don't come here for the stories. You don't come here for the entertainment. You don't come here for the warmth of my personality. You come here to learn something from the Word of God. And because you are Bereans, you want to know whether I'm conning or not. Therefore, you have to read this in Scripture, and while you are willing to listen, you want to confirm that what I have told you is indeed the truth, because that is very important, and you will be held accountable if you believe something that is false just because the preacher told you that. You must know what God has said. So, you should never come to the place where you do not have a deep appreciation for the Bible itself.

This is the book which is your life, and you should take the trouble to be a student of the Word of God – whatever it takes. It may take your sitting here in church with a piece of paper, and jotting a few thoughts down that strike you, so that you can go home and think about on Sunday afternoon. Or you can go back and re-read the Scriptures so that you can rethink what you have been taught. The Word of God is the key to everything in life. No voice is going to come to you from any other place except this book.

So, we've had the first "hallelujah" in verse 1. All the saints in heaven are praising God for His salvation; His glory; and, His power, and rejoicing that the judgments of God are true and they're righteous, and they've dealt with the harlot Babylon, and God has brought judgment because of her immorality that she has taught the human race, and because of the blood of the servants of God that she has shed.

In verse 3, we had a second "hallelujah." This "hallelujah" was praising God for the fact that this city, with all that she represents is a pile of ashes.

**The 24 Elders**

Now we come to verse 4, and we read about the worship of God the Father in verses 4 and 5. Here are the worshipers in verse 4: "And the 24 elders." These 24 elders we have met early on in the book of the Revelations. Remember that they are symbolic of the church. The 24 elders represent the body of Christ, the church-age saints. In Revelation 1 through 3, we had the seven letters to the seven churches. In Revelation 4, we began the tribulation era, and then the 24 elders are in heaven because the rapture has taken place. So, here in heaven are the 24 elders representing all the saints of all church from the day of Pentecost down – the whole church body. In fact, at this point, it is in heaven because the rapture has taken place. Remember that after the rapture, there are no more people added to the church body. The church body is a distinct group of believers. It started with that group that was alive on the day of Pentecost, and when the last person is born again, and the rapture takes place, that's the end. You should not call anybody Christians except those who belong to the body of Christ. That's the term for those who are in Christ. You don't call Old Testament saints Christians. They are believers, but they are not Christians. Only those who are in Christ have that distinct name. So these 24 elders represent the Christians.

**The Four Living Creatures**

Then he also says that there are these four living creatures. And we've also had them early on in the book of Revelation. These were four cherub class, very high authority angels. They represent all the holy angels who have remained loyal to God. The four living creatures surround the throne of God as an honor guard. They represent all the angels who remained loyal to God. It seems, in Scripture, that of all the multiplied billions of angels that God made, one-third of them rebelled with Satan, and two-thirds remained loyal. These four cherub class angels, forming the honor guard around the throne of God, represent those angels.

**Worship**

So, here we have all the saints of the church, and all of the angels, represented by these elders and living creatures, and we read that they fall down and they worship God. They fall down. That means that they bow down in the position of subjection to God the Father, and they worship Him. The word "worship" is the Greek word "proskuneo." This word is made up of two words. The word "pros" means "toward." The word "kuneo" means "to kiss." So, the word "proskuneo" means "to kiss toward." This is a symbolic gesture of recognizing your subjection to divine authority (to a sovereign authority). This is why the Pope, as the representative of God on earth, holds out his hand when you approach him. He has a large ring on that hand, which is called the fisherman's ring, and he extends it to you. And you kneel before him, and you kiss his ring. That indicates your objection to the Pope (to his authority), and your obedience to him as the one who speaks for God on this earth. This is where the idea comes form. It comes from the very word of "worship." Worship means to pay homage to deity. And "to kiss toward" is to pay homage. It is to express your subjection to that authority. It literally means to kiss toward to indicate your subjection.

So, the next time you see someone that you like, and you blow a kiss to them, remember that you indicating your objection to that person. So, don't go blowing your kisses around too readily. This is a recognition of the worthiness of God as the Supreme Being. It is an expression of yielding to the authority and the will of God as the sovereign one. Worship acknowledges that what God says, and what he does, is true, and it is right.

The antichrist claims to be true and right, and he wants to deceive the whole world in worshiping him, but he is now exposed as a fraud. One day, we're going to find that God's perfect wisdom is because He is everything that He claims to be, and He has stood us in good stead. The antichrist is a fraud, and worshiping him is foolishness.

**Amen**

So, the Christians and the angels worship God. They indicate their subjection to his authority, and they approve what He is doing. Specifically, He is identified as the one who sits on the throne, which indicates God's imperial authority as the supreme judge of the universe. And they say the word "Amen." Amen means "so be it." It is an expression of approval. The elders and the living creatures express their wholehearted approval of God's destruction of Babylon. That's what they're saying "Amen" to: "Amen, God. That's the way to do it. Go for it." Then they add the third "hallelujah" in this passage. Again they say, "Hallelujah. Praise the Lord." The elders and the living creatures are praising God for obliterating Babylon once for all.

So, the response to the will of God upon Babylon is approval and praise.

In verse 5, the worship continues as John hears a voice that comes from the throne of God. This is a nameless voice, probably the voice of an angel. The throne of God is the focal point of attention in this passage, because it is the source of divine judgments that are being exercised on Babylon.

**To Give Praise**

It says, "To give praise." This is a way for praise in the Greek Bible ("aineo"), which is used only of praise to God. It means "to speak in praise of God." In the Greek language, it is a command. That is very serious: "Praise God." There is a lot of fakery in praising God. The charismatics like to have what they call praise sessions in their services, where everybody in the service is praising God. It is a put-on thing to give everybody a time to get a big emotional jag that comes from the old sin nature.

I remember some years ago when my daughter, Heidi, was a junior-age, or maybe a teenager. We were home after church, and we were watching one of the all-time greats, Jimmy Swaggart. He was at the point of the service where they were having a praise session. He was up there crying. As you know, he does that very well. He stood up to the microphone, and the tears were flowing, and he was crying, and he was praising God, and the cameras were panning the audience. Everybody's hands were up, and the ladies were going bananas, and the men were going bonko, and everybody was praising, and the place was in turmoil. I said, "Heidi, now watch this. In a moment, he's going to decide that they've had enough of this, and he's ready to go on to the next bit of his promotion. And he's going to turn this off." The words were no sooner out of my mouth, and he said, "All right, let's sing the hymn now," and the faucet was turned, and it was all done, and he turned it off when he was ready to turn it off. He turned it on when he wanted it, and he kept pumping it, and he continued. And then he turned it off when he was through. Everybody had a good time, and the offering was very good that day, because it all had a big emotional jag, and they thought that they had had a contact with God.

That's not the kind of praise that this is talking about. This is praise which is generated in your heart from God the Holy Spirit by the things that God's grace does for you – that you should not take with indifference, and that you should not take without realizing that you don't deserve it. Therefore, we are to praise God for what He does. This is why I think it is not a good thing for you to skip the Lord's Supper meeting, because of the fact that that meeting is explicitly devoted to praise. That is our praise meeting here at Berean Church. It is a time for you to get up and say, "Here's what God did for me, and I want to publicly thank Him for it. I want to praise Him. This is genuine praise for genuine results that God has produced in your life. This is the right and proper thing to do, and that's what I point out to you that when it says "Give praise" here, it is a command from God. This voice from the throne is commanding these people that this is a thing they should do. It is not in a fake way from the sin nature, but in a genuine way from the Spirit of God. God is the object of praise. He is worthy of it, and He merits it in every way.

This praise is to come, it says, "From His bond servants." These are the saints who are in heaven: those who are in subjection to God the Father. These are His bond servants who fear Him. These are people who fear God. This word means to be possessed by reverence for God's holiness. All these saints in heaven have a deep respect for God's sovereign authority over them. It is that sovereign authority that chose them out of the mass of human beings to be saved. He is the one who brought them to heaven, and only the spiritually blinded do not fear the wrath of God against their sin. These people know what God has done, and they know what they deserve. They know that He has preserved them from. And heaven is a wonderful place. They are all euphoric up there.

This invitation to praise to the servants is extended to the common folk, and to the famous ones. It says, "You who fear Him, who are among the small and the great." The leaders of every socio-economic level in society are addressed here. Praising God is very important.

Now, people who are in lower socio-economic status are inclined to praise God more. They don't have a lot in life. What comes to them comes to them with a great deal of difficulty, and they never have a lot of surplus. It is the people who really well-off who should be praising God in an enormous way. They are the ones that just don't do it. They just take it all in stride, and they never stop, and just sit down, and thank God for what He has done.

Every time you sit down to a meal, it's an opportunity for mentioning praise, as you ask God's blessing on the food that He has given you (unless you're one of the pig types who just jumps in and starts eating). Our thanksgiving is included, and there may be something fresh on your mind. That's a good time to be praising God. It is our duty to praise God. This business of praising God is a particular responsibility of Christians because it is one of the church-age spiritual sacrifices.

**Priesthood**

1 Peter 2:5 points out a very important principles. Speaking of Christians, he says, "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Peter is pointing to us that we Christians are the priests. There is no longer an Aaronic priesthood. We are placed under the high priest, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the priest under the order of Melchizedek, which is superior to that of the Aaronic priest. The Aaronic priesthood came through Abraham. Abraham was in subjection to the priesthood of Melchizedek. The priesthood of Melchizedek, therefore, is superior to the priesthood that came through Abraham, the priesthood of Aaron. We Christians are of the Melchizedek priesthood, and we *are* priests of God. That's why we tell you that you are your own priest.

Any religious system that says that priests are a clergy separate from the laity is a false system. The Roman Catholic system is a false system. It says that there are priests through which you approach God. This is one of the great things that came out of the Reformation, when Luther suddenly realized that every believer is a priest.

**The Sacrifice of Praise**

One of the things that priests do is offer sacrifices. In the church age, we do not offer animal sacrifices, but it is important for you to realize that you are required to offer certain spiritual sacrifices. We're not going to go into all of them now, but I think it is appropriate that we look at the one we're talking about, the sacrifice of praise, which you find in Hebrews 13:15: "Through whom then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God; that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."

**A Verbalized Testimony**

This sacrifice of praise has to do with the Christian priest's mental attitude of gratitude: "Through Him," referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our high priest, we have access to God the Father. "Through Him, we offer up." And the Greek language has the tense that indicates that we *continually* offer up a sacrifice. This is an offering: "Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise." The word "praise" is the Greek word "ainesis." This is an interesting word because what this means is "a tale." It is a narration or a story. Isn't it interesting that God the Holy Spirit uses this word referring to praise as a narration – a verbalized testimony about God the Father.

This is something that you say about God. This is something that you talk about. This is something where you roll your eyes up in your head; hold your hands over your head; and, keep saying, "Hallelujah. Praise the Lord." Praising God is not an emotional jag, although you have a great deal of emotion with it. It is verbalizing. It is putting together a testimony. This is exactly what you Christians are called upon to do continually. What are we verbalizing? Gratitude: thanking God for what he has done. Gratitude is very important. This praise is important because it expresses your gratitude to God, and what that does is it preserves your blessings for you.

Notice Romans 1:21, which says, "For even though they (the human race) knew God, they did not honor him as God, or give thanks. But they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened. Paul says that people knew about God. They had information from the very first. It was transmitted from the Garden of Eden, but they didn't honor what they knew. They were like Cain. They ignored it. They thumbed their noses at God. And they didn't thank God for the blessings of God. The result was that their minds drifted off from God into futile speculations, and their hearts went into spiritual darkness. With that, they lost the blessings that God had.

So, think about something that you think is very valuable to you – something that you really appreciate having, and something that you would really regret losing. One way to keep it is to put it into words, and thank God for it. When you verbalize your thanksgiving, you make yourself aware of how important God's blessings have been to you. It is extremely important to practice the sacrifice of praise. Ingrates lose their perspectives on themselves. Ingrates forget what zeros we all are at best. Galatians 6:3 puts it this way: "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." ... We all think we're really something, and the Bible says, "You're nothing. You deceive yourself."

How did the apostle Paul put it? "I am what I am by the grace of God." Now, you are something, but you're something because God made you that. You are something in many tremendous, wonderful, marvelous ways. You are a great deal. But never lose track of the fact that it is the grace of God that has made you something. And therefore, appreciate that, and keep thanking him for it.

So, what gift do you have? What ability do you have? What good things are in your life? What grace has been bestowed upon you? What ennoblement has come into your soul? Praise Him for it: "Thank you, God. Thank you. Thank you." And be specific. We are to offer this sacrifice continually. The ingrate leads to the violation of the principle of Romans 12:3: "For through the grace given me, I say to every man among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to have sound judgment as God has allotted to each a measure of faith."

The minister who probably had the most influence on my life as a teenager was my particular good friend. It was just one of those things that clicked with a youth and an older person. One of the things he used to repeat to me (reiterate to me) was that he said, "Always try to exercise good judgment." And somebody would do something, and he would say to me, "You see, that was a case of bad judgment." And that's exactly what the apostle Paul is saying. There is nothing greater in life than to be able to be associated with a person that has good judgment: "Through the grace of God given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but so as to think to have sound judgment as God has allotted a measure of faith." Faith in what? Faith in the Word of doctrine. And the more that you have, and the more confidence you have in it, and accepted, the greater will be your capacity and judgment. That's what makes you smart. That's what gives you insight and capacity.

For that kind of judgment, you should thank God. Those who are ingrates never catch on to the marvelous provision of God's grace.

Also, back to Hebrews 13:15, how does he express this? He's very expressive on that: "Offer up the sacrifice of praise;" that is, what are we talking about? "The fruit" is referring to the product of a Christian's speech. "Of lips" is referring to the Christian's mouth as the producer of verbal fruit: "Lips that give thanks to His name."

This is an interesting word also. It is a word that you you're acquainted with from 1 John 1:9, of all things. It is the word "homologeo." This is the word in 1 John 1:9 that says, "If we confess ('homologeo'):" if we admit; or, if we sight. Isn't that interesting that what is translated as "give thanks" is really the word "confess." It is saying, "Lips that confess to His name: lips that continually admit something about God." That's what it's saying. Confess means to admit something, or to sight something. That's why 1 John 1:9 says to admit your sin. Confess it to God. You are to state it, or to sight it. Here, you are saying something to His name, representing all that God is as a person. That's what he's talking about – admitting. We recognize who and what God is, and we give God verbal credit for what He does as an expression of your gratitude.

So, we are confessing (admitting) what God's name represents, and giving Him credit for what He does. That's an expression of gratitude as part of the sacrifice of praise.

Psalm 22:22 connects praising God with His name – what He is and what He does. It's an interesting connection: "I will tell of Your name to my brethren. In the midst of the assembly, I will praise You." The name of God is connected with praising God. Psalm 22 is a preview of the death of Christ on the cross. The very first verse begins, of all things, with a prediction 800 years in the future, in the words which Christ would utter on the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Then, in great detail, this psalm describes crucifixion upon the cross, and the death, and the abuse of the people at the foot of the cross – the ridicule, and the whole thing.

The Jewish rabbis have a terrible problem with this psalm because it is so explicitly connected with Jesus Christ in its details. They say that this is not talking about a person, but about the nation of Israel suffering in this way. But that is nonsense as you read the psalm. Verse 22 comes to resurrection. The crucifixion is over. The suffering is passed. This verse is applied in the New Testament to Jesus Christ, who is the resurrected one. It tells all that the name of God represents to His brethren in the midst of the assembly, and He praises them. By telling what God stands for, which His name represents, He praises God. It is another expression of confessing what the name of God represents: His character; and, His essence.

Verbalizing God's blessings is going to help us to keep from being ingrates. It helps us to remember from whence we have come. It also helps us remember, in the bad times, all the good times we have had. It was because Job was a man who practiced praising God, when the bad times came to him, he could rebuke his wife: "Shall we accept the good things from God, and not these things that He has permitted that are evil to come into our lives? The Lord has given; the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Nobody can say a thing like that unless he is a person of great spiritual maturity, and has learned how to praise God.

So, praising God is important. At these testimony meetings that we have at the Lord's Supper time, we have an opportunity (now I think you see), for offering sacrifice of praise in a very distinctive way. You should not check out on the Lord's Supper evening. You should really be eager to come and speak. That doesn't mean that you have to be long-winded. Some of you might be intimidated to stand up and speak, but you shouldn't be because you start off with a simple thing. Anybody can stand up and say, "I'm glad I'm saved, and I thank God for it," and then sit down. You don't have to have a long testimony.

Those of you who are younger are the ones who should be leading out. I notice that we have a lot of the older generation who speak, but a lot of our young people never speak. And a lot of you younger ones (college age) never speak. I'm always so sad that God has never done anything for you.

Praising God is the way to keep from being an ingrate, and praising God is the way to keep from losing all those good things that you value. So, smarten up.

When we sing hymns and gospel songs expressing praise of our gratitude to God, that is one way that we offer the sacrifice of praise. We celebrate spiritual victories and joys with praise, such as Moses did at the Red Sea with his song. Psalm 50:23 tells us that all such expressions of praise are glorifying to God. The sacrifice of praise is comparable to the category of sacrifices in the Old Testament which were called the sweet fragrant aroma sacrifices. These were sacrifices that had a particular pleasing quality to God. It also preserves the believer priest from worry. Praise in heaven is received with great rejoicing. As I say, the most negligent Christians in praising God are not the suffering ones, but those who are blessed. Those who are suffering know how much they need God. And every little thing that He does, they praise Him for. "Praise the Lord" is not a bad phrase to use.

**The Reign of God**

In Revelation 19:6, we now come to the reign of God. We have had three hallelujahs thus far. And here we come to the reign of God, and once more, John hears a great voice: "As it were," comparing it to, on the one hand, a great multitude. This is a voice of a multitude of people (millions of people) speaking together as one. On the one hand, he compares it to the sound of many waters: "The voice of the multitude sounds like an array of a mighty cataract of water – a Niagara Falls. Have you ever been to Niagara Falls? Niagara Falls is exactly what this is describing, and if you have ever been there, you can appreciate what John has in mind, because it is kind of really scary to come up to that rail and look over the falls and hear that thunderous water coming down. It is even more scary to go to the subterranean tunnels, and then come actually where you are standing behind the falls, and you are at the bottom of what has come crashing down from the distance above you. And you hear this terrific roar of water falling.

**The Fourth Hallelujah**

John said that it sounded like that to him. Also, he compares it once more to the sound of the mighty peals of thunder. This is the voice of a multitude that sounds like enormous peals of thunder reverberating in the atmosphere. The water flow and the thunder analogy are given to convey the sense of majesty and power of the praise which is being expressed by the multitude. And here we have the fourth "hallelujah." Once more, this expression of praise comes bursting forth from this heavenly company. This is the last of the four times that the word "hallelujah" is used in the book of the Revelation in the New Testament, as a matter of fact. Four times God preserves this special word. Only four times the Holy Spirit uses it, and they're right here in Revelation 19:1-6.

**Almighty God**

It comes from the hearts of those who delight at being at one with the will of God. They appreciate His actions. And for the fourth time, they shout out together, "Praise the Lord." Here, it becomes very specific: "For the Lord our God." The word "Lord" is indicating deity. The word "God" is indicating *the* God, God the Father. And He is God the Almighty, referring to the omnipotence of God which accomplishes all His plans – God's power, in contrast to the limited, finite power of Satan, who cannot overcome God's will.

This word "almighty" is used nine times in the book of the Revelation about God. It is only used once more in the whole New Testament, in 2 Corinthians 6:18 in connection with God. So here is another word that the Holy Spirit uses in a very exclusive way. Nine times in the book is of the Revelation, he says, "Almighty God." It's important to remember that He is Almighty God, because you and I think we're up against forces that have overcome God. We think that the United States government is bigger than God. I know Congress thinks that. We have voices all around us, in the institutions of society, that look bigger than God. We are victimized by evil forces in our society and evil people. We shake our heads in frustration, and we wonder where God is. Never doubt for a moment that He is God Almighty. Here, where there are such powerful forces under Satan, mighty in intensity to a climax against God, the Holy Spirit keeps reminding us through this book that God is almighty. He is Almighty God.

**The Footstool**

Also, because He is Almighty God, the great thing for which the saints are praising Him is that: "He reigns." This refers to the return of Jesus Christ to rule in His Millennial Kingdom on this earth. As the Lord Jesus Christ rises from His heavenly position, at the right hand of God the Father, where He shares the Father's throne, the time has arrived for Him to return to this earth. In Psalm 110:11, God the Father says, "I want you to sit here at My right hand, on My throne, sharing it with Me until I make all of Your enemies Your footstool, where You'll put your foot on every one of them." The last enemy here is the false trinity of Satan; the antichrist; and, the false prophet. They are about to be brought down in Babylon, with all that represents them. So, the footstool is already ready, and the time has arrived for Jesus Christ now arise and to be seated on His own throne, as the heir of King David.

In Luke 1:32, Mary was told that she would bear this child, and that this child would be the fulfillment of the promise of God, relative to the Kingdom of God through David upon this earth. Mary was told: "And He (Jesus) will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of His father David. What is the throne of His father David? It is not the church. The throne of His father David is the earthly throne over the Jewish people here on this earth, centered in Jerusalem. All of history has been moving toward the establishment of that throne, which we will get into in greater detail. But it began with the promise to Abraham.

The time has come for Jesus Christ to stand up from sharing the Father's throne, and to proceed to return to this earth, to sit upon his throne, as the rightful heir of the descendant of David. The return of Jesus Christ is greeted by this mighty roar of praise from the multitude in heaven. That's what they mean when they're saying, "Hallelujah," because God is finally going to reign. Does He reign now? Yes, but this is not that reign. This is reigning over the earth. The time has come for the praise of multiplied millions of saints, and it sounds like the roar of a waterfall, and the ear-splitting crash of thunder, because these people are enthusiastic. Whatever you may hear at the super bowl crowd cheering this afternoon, it's going to be like nothing. What you hear here on this occasion will be a million times greater than what will be in that stadium. The saints' volume of praise grows in intensity. It reverberates throughout the universe in joyous exuberance. The Almighty Lord God is taking over the government of the world from Satan, and the saints praise Him for it.

This is the moment which was anticipated earlier in Revelation 11:15: "The seventh angel sounded, and there arose loud voices in heaven saying, "The kingdom of the world (notice a single kingdom – the kingdom of the antichrist) has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever." That passage anticipated what now is about to take place in Revelation 19, and all the saints of heaven are rejoicing and praising God. After 6,000 years of domination of this earth by the kingdom of man, finally comes the 1,000-year Kingdom of God with Christ ruling from David's throne in Jerusalem. Here is the fulfillment of the petition in the model prayer that Jesus gave, with that petition which said, "Thy Kingdom Come." That's what He was talking about: "Thy kingdom come." God the Almighty is able to establish His kingdom on earth – a kingdom of peace and prosperity, where all of Satan's efforts have ended in dismal failure.

**A Child Born; and, a Son Given**

This is not merely spiritual regeneration of individuals, but this is spiritual orientation of nations, and their political regeneration. Isn't that something? The nations are politically regenerated. This is going to be the removal of the old pattern among nations and political leaders of tyranny; corruption; abuse of power; bureaucratic oppression; pursuit of equality by coercion; and, the denial of personal freedom. This is the fulfillment of the role of Christ which is described for us in Isaiah 9:6-7: "For a child will be born to us, and a Son given." Do you see how explicit Scripture is? "A child (the humanity of Christ) will be born to us, but a Son (the deity of Christ) will be given to us." The deity of Christ was not born in Bethlehem. The body was born. The child was born, and the Son (who was eternal) was given.

"And the government will rest on His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. And there will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and righteousness. From then on, and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will accomplish this.

That passage is about to be fulfilled here, in what we are reading in Revelation 19. Christ is about to assume His role as the ruler of the world. So, this is not merely individual regeneration. This is the generation of whole nations. And He will reign supreme from David's throne, in a kingdom of peace and prosperity. This is the total replacement of the kingdom of man by the Kingdom of God. This is exactly what was predicted by Daniel.

**Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream**

I want to keep making this connection back to the Old Testament – that God has a plan, and He's carrying it out. These things are no surprise. The Kingdom of God replaces the kingdom of man. That is what is ahead, probably in the next decade of your life here on this earth. In Daniel 2:31-45, we have this description of this total replacement of the political system of man with the political system of God's one. Daniel is speaking to Nebuchadnezzar, describing and interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream: "You, O king, were looking, and behold, there was a single great statue. That statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. The head of the statue was made of fine gold; its breast and its arms of silver; its belly and its thighs of bronze; and, its feet partly of iron, and partly of clay. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. And the iron; the clay; the bronze; the silver; and, the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the center threshing floor, and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Then it goes on to explain in the verses that follow: Nebuchadnezzar himself was the head of gold. And these represent kingdoms: four world empires which were yet to come on this earth. And history has proven them to be exactly correct. When the gold kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar passed on, on came the silver kingdom of the Medo-Persian kingdom. When that passed on, there came the kingdom of bronze, which was the kingdom of Greece. When that passed on, there came to kingdom of Rome, which was iron but mixed with the weakness of clay. What is being restored today is that Roman Empire, which has been fractured into nations, but which the nations are bringing together. Do you see why we're telling you that the kingdom of Rome (the empire of Rome) has not ceased to exist? It has just been in a dormant state. And the rulers of the world are rushing to put the empire back together. For whom? For the great emperor, the antichrist. That's why there will only be one kingdom for Jesus Christ to replace on this earth. There is going to be a world government.

Then it says that Nebuchadnezzar saw, supernaturally, a great, huge stone carved out of the mountain. And it came, and it flew like a comet, and it hit that statue in the feet and crushed it. And then you notice that it says, "All the gold; the silver; the bronze; the iron; and, the clay were crushed at the same time, because the kingdom of antichrist will incorporate all the features of the empires that have preceded the kingdom that he rules over. He will be the last of the Roman emperors. And it all, like chaff, is blown away such that it is not found. And this stone, which is supernaturally carved out of the mountain, becomes a great mountain (that is, a great kingdom). That's what the symbol. And it fills the whole earth with the Kingdom of Christ.

So here, Daniel, long ago, told us exactly what's going to happen. Christ is going to come. He's going to replace the whole system of the kingdom of man. That system is doomed.

The mother of herself, as we've already pointed out, was told that Jesus was destined to be this kind of king. Now this is going to be fulfilled. The world Kingdom of Christ did not come at His First Advent, because the Jewish people rejected Him. It will come at His Second Coming. This is the plan. Jesus himself confirmed that to us. Luke 19:11-13: "And while they were listening to these things, He went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately." The disciples thought, "Now, this is it. He came to bring us a kingdom, and He's going to set it up.

"He said to them, 'A certain nobleman to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and then return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' And it came about that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called in to him, in order that he might know what business they had done.

"The first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas.' He said to him, 'Well done, good slave. Because you have been faithful in very little things, be in authority over ten cities.' And the second came saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' And he said to him, 'You are to be over five cities.' One came to him and said, 'Master, behold your mina which I kept put away in a handkerchief. But I was afraid, because you are exacting man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.' And he said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? And so then why did you not put the money in the bank, and when I came back, I would have collected it with interest?'

"And he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' They said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.' 'I tell you that to everyone who has shall more be given, but from him who does not have, even that what he has will be taken away. But these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here, and slay them in my presence. ...

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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