

This passage follows immediately after the judgment of “the great whore” (Babylon) in chapters 17, 18 and describes the celebration in heaven because God has avenged His people. Heaven continues to celebrate because the time has come for Christ to return for His bride and take His rightful place of sovereignty over the earth.

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<sup>1</sup> 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:

After the destruction of Babylon John hears countless voices in heaven as they cry out praises to God. The Greek word for “people” means a crowd or a multitude so “much people” indicates a very large multitude. The word “alleluia” is transliterated from a Hebrew word meaning “Praise the Lord.” The voices credit God with salvation, glory, honor and power, praising Him for His righteous and the justness of His judgments.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

God was expressing His truth and righteousness when He destroyed “the great whore” because she was like a cancer, corrupting the earth with her spiritual fornication. This spiritual fornication speaks of the false religions of the world where man has worshiped other gods besides the true God. By destroying the great whore God was also avenging the blood of His servants which she had shed, satisfying the cry of the souls under the altar that had asked how long before this was to be done (Rev. 6:9-11).

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<sup>3</sup> And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

The voices erupt in another round of praise for God as they celebrate the destruction of Babylon. They declare that the smoke from her destruction will forever rise from her ruins, further indicating the permanence of the destruction. This picture may also refer to the eternal suffering that both she and those who took part in her sins will endure in the lake of fire. **Rev. 14:11** “*And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*”

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

After hearing the other voices expressing God’s praise, the 24 elders and the four beasts that John saw originally in chapter 4 also join in the worship. They express their agreement with the other voices with an “Amen” and also proclaim “Alleluia” (“Praise the Lord”).

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<sup>5</sup> 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 a voice came out of the throne”** - It’s unclear whose voice this is, but likely it is an angel. The voice doesn’t come out of the chair that God is sitting on because as we saw in chapters 4 and 5 the word “throne” refers to both the chair where God is seated as well as the platform on which it sits. This angel is probably among the group of angels that is on the throne platform.

**“saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants”** - The voice calls on all of God’s servants to join in praising God.

**“and ye that fear him”** - The Greek word for “fear” can mean “to be afraid” but it can also mean “to reverence; to honor.” Everyone who fears/respects/honors/reverences God should be praising Him for judging the great whore and for what is coming next.

**“both small and great”** - It doesn’t matter how low or high your rank, we are all merely servants of God and must bow and praise Him with our worship for He is worthy. **Psalm 150:6** “*Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.*”

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<sup>6</sup> 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.

**“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”** - All of heaven responds to the invitation of the voice from the throne by praising God. The sound is so awesome that John makes three attempts to convey what the voices sounded like. He says it was the “voice of a great multitude.” The Greek word for “multitude” is the same as for “people” in v. 1, so it was like the voices of a large group of people. It was also like “the voice of many waters.” And finally it was like “the voice of mighty thunderings.” Can you imagine the power and volume of that many voices in unison proclaiming the praises of God?

**“saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth”** - Think about the evil and sin that has been happening on earth for thousands of years as well as the rebellion of Satan. These things have not continued because God is powerless to stop it. Rather, He is waiting until the appropriate time to intervene, judge sin and take control of His creation. These voices are praising God for His omnipotence (all powerful) and His sovereignty. Christ is about to establish His kingdom on earth.

We often enjoy praising God for how we’ve benefited personally because of what He’s done, but how often do we praise God for His omnipotence and the fact that He reigns over all creation? We like it when God does what we want and rescues us from our problems, what about when His will allows our suffering to continue? Do we still praise God in the midst of our troubles knowing that He’s in control and that we can trust His sovereign will? Many of these voices are those who died at the hand of the great whore and they are still praising God for His power and that He reigns over all. There has never been a moment in history where God ever lost control of a situation. When evil has seemed to triumph, it was only because God only allowed it in order to serve His big-picture purpose.

<sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

**“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour [glory] to him”** - The Greek word for “honor” is most often translated “glory” elsewhere in the NT. The gladness, rejoicing and giving of honor is just what happens in an earthly wedding. The guests honor the bride and groom as they express their gladness for them. God alone gets the glory in this case.

**“for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”** - The popular interpretation is that the church is the bride of Christ, but my belief is that the bride is Israel and the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb will be the church.

Although the Gentiles are eventually included as the targets of gospel preaching in the book of Acts, Christ’s kingdom is primarily about His reconciliation with Israel. Our ego tends to make us insert the church as the recipients of various promises in the Bible that are intended for Jewish believers. Christ’s earthly ministry was primarily to Israel alone, and said as much: **Matt. 15:24** *“But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* When He sent the disciples out to preach He told them to minister only to the house of Israel: **Matt. 10:5-7** *“<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: <sup>6</sup> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

When two people get married today there are usually two phases: 1) the engagement; 2) the wedding day. In Christ’s day Jewish marriages were handled a bit differently. The first phase was the betrothal, which was similar to what we call an engagement but more binding. Once betrothed, the second phase begins where the groom-to-be goes away to “prepare a place” for his bride and himself to live. The third phase is the marriage when he returns in a wedding procession to take his bride to their new home to enjoy the wedding feast and their new life together. We can see the return of the groom as the context of Christ’s parable of the ten virgins in Matt. 25:1-13.

The language Christ uses during the last supper is of a Jewish wedding: **John 14:2-3** *“<sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* He said He would go away to prepare a place for them and that He would return to take them to be with Him, just as a groom does for his bride.

The bride of Christ (the Lamb) is further identified in **Rev. 21:9-10**: *“<sup>9</sup> And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...”* John is shown the New Jerusalem and most of the description of the city in the following verses points to Israel: 1) the city is the capital of Israel; 2) it has 12 gates named after the 12 tribes of Israel; 3) it has 12 foundations named after the 12 apostles who were sent to Israel (Paul was sent to the Gentiles); 4) the 12 foundations of the wall are decorated with 12 types of stones which seem to match the 12 stones in the priest’s breastplate that he wore when ministering in the tabernacle.

The popular interpretation is that the marriage supper of the lamb occurs just before Christ returns to the earth but if the bride is Israel, then this verse is declaring that the time has come for Christ to return for His bride, not with His bride as the popular interpretation says. The marriage supper cannot happen until after the groom returns for his bride and so at this point the marriage/supper has not yet occurred.

<sup>8</sup> And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

The bride of the Lamb has been washed from her sins in the blood of Christ and so she is dressed accordingly.

<sup>9</sup> And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

**“And he saith unto me”** - This is probably the angel that was showing John the judgment of the great whore (Rev. 17:1).

**“Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”** - Those who believe that the church is the bride typically believe that the guests called to the marriage supper are the Jewish believers. However, if the bride is Israel then these guests would have to be the Gentile believers in Christ. Only the redeemed will be at the marriage supper, whether part of the bride or a guest.

**“And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God”** - The angel is telling John that all these things are in fulfillment of the true and faithful promises of God. Everything that He has promised is coming to pass.

<sup>10</sup> And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

**“And I fell at his feet to worship him”** - John is so overwhelmed by everything that he is seeing he impulsively falls down to worship the angel that has been showing him these glorious things.

**“And he said unto me, See thou do it not”** - The angel forbids John from worshiping him and instead turns the focus to God. Our culture has put too much emphasis on angels in recent years but God Himself should be the only focus of our reverence.

**“I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus”** - Angels are our fellow servants for they serve God just as we do. This angel identifies himself as being fellow servant to John and all those who also have the testimony of Jesus.

**“worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”** - The angel directs John’s worship to where it belongs: God. He adds that the “spirit” (breath; life) of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. All prophecy in both the OT and the NT collectively point to Jesus Christ as the Messiah Who is coming again. He is the focus and without Him prophecy is pointless.