

NOON BIBLE STUDY: REVELATION 19 (PART 1)

THE JUDGMENT UPON BABYLON HAS COME! THE REIGN OF EVIL, DARKNESS AND SIN HAS ENDED! GOD HAS BROUGHT JUSTICE, SALVATION AND VINDICATION AT LAST! THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL WILL CEASE AND GOD'S PEOPLE WILL BE DELIVERED. TWO CHAPTERS OF THE DESCRIPTION OF JUDGMENT OF GOD UPON EVIL (PERSONIFIED IN THE BABYLONIAN SYSTEM) CONCLUDE AND THE NEXT THING JOHN SEES AND HEARS ARE CELEBRATORY PROCLAMATIONS FROM HEAVEN.

AS WE READ THIS SECTION WE WILL READ THE WORD "HALLELUJAH" APPEAR 4 TIMES. THE WORD HALLELUJAH IS A HEBREW WORD WHICH MEANS "PRAISE YAHWEH". IT IS OFTEN USED IN THE PSALMS AS A CALL FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE PRAISE TO YAHWEH. (THE WORD HALLELUJAH ISN'T A WORD OF PRAISE ITSELF BUT A COMMAND THAT THOSE LISTENING OUGHT TO GIVE PRAISE TO GOD). AMAZINGLY THE 4 HALLELUJAHS OF REVELATION 19 ARE THE ONLY TIMES THAT THE WORD APPEARS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!

REVELATION 19:1-2 - FIRST VOICE: GOD-EXALTING DECLARATION

A LOUD VOICE OF A GREAT MULTITUDE IN HEAVEN - *"HALLELUJAH! SALVATION AND GLORY AND POWER BELONG TO OUR GOD!"*

WHY IS GOD WORTHY OF PRAISE AND GLORY? "BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS" (V. 2), SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO THE JUDGMENT OF THE HARLOT FROM REVELATION 17-18.

V. 2 - THE HARLOT'S SINS ARE SUMMARIZED IN TWO CATEGORIES:

- 1 - SHE WAS CORRUPTING THE EARTH WITH HER IMMORALITY
- 2 - SHE HAD SPILLED THE BLOOD OF GOD'S SERVANTS

GOD HAS JUDGED HER FOR BOTH OF THESE THINGS. AT THE END OF A TRIAL, THE JUDGE OR THE JURY FOREMAN WILL READ THE VERDICT. THE ACCUSED WAITS FOR THEIR DECISION ALONG WITH THE VICTIMS OR THE VICTIM'S LOVED ONES. THE ASSEMBLED PEOPLE IN THE GALLERY ALSO WAIT TO HEAR WHAT WAS DECIDED. IN THIS CASE A LOUD VOICE READS OFF - GUILTY. AND THE VOICES ARE CALLING THE EARTH AND THE READER TO PRAISE GOD BECAUSE OF HIS JUDGMENT. GOD IS WORTHY OF PRAISE BECAUSE HE IS GOOD AND LOVING AND BECAUSE HE IS JUST AND RIGHTEOUS. HALLELUJAH!

REVELATION 19:3 - SECOND VOICE - ANNOUNCEMENT OF ETERNAL SENTENCING

THE SAME LOUD VOICE OF THE HEAVENLY MULTITUDE NOW READS THE SENTENCING DECISION. WHAT WILL THE GUILTY PARTY RECEIVE AS PUNISHMENT? A FINE? HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE? PROBATION? HOME CONFINEMENT? PRISON? NO - IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT THE GUILTY HARLOT WILL GET AN EVERLASTING DEATH SENTENCE.

BUT WHAT DOES "SMOKE RISING FOREVER AND EVER" MEAN? IS THERE GOING TO BE A PLACE IN THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH OF BURNING AND SMOKE EVEN THOUGH WE ARE PROMISED THAT DEATH AND EVIL WILL BE NO MORE? THANKFULLY THE BIBLE HAS ANSWERS. THE LANGUAGE USED HERE IS FROM AN OLD TESTAMENT PRONOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH. IN ISAIAH, THE EVIL NATION OF EDMON IS USED TO REPRESENT THE EVIL NATIONS THAT HAVE OPPRESSED GOD'S PEOPLE. THE PROPHET DESCRIBES THE PEOPLE OF EDMON BEING KILLED AND THE CITIES OF THE NATION BEING DESOLATED. HEAR WHAT THE LORD SAID:

ISAIAH 34:1-15 (NLT) - COME HERE AND LISTEN, O NATIONS OF THE EARTH. LET THE WORLD AND EVERYTHING IN IT HEAR MY WORDS. 2 FOR THE LORD IS ENRAGED AGAINST THE NATIONS. HIS FURY IS AGAINST ALL THEIR ARMIES. HE WILL COMPLETELY DESTROY THEM, DOOMING THEM TO SLAUGHTER. 3 THEIR DEAD WILL BE LEFT UNBURIED, AND THE STENCH OF ROTTING BODIES WILL FILL THE LAND. THE MOUNTAINS WILL FLOW WITH THEIR BLOOD.

4 THE HEAVENS ABOVE WILL MELT AWAY AND DISAPPEAR LIKE A ROLLED-UP SCROLL. THE STARS WILL FALL FROM THE SKY LIKE WITHERED LEAVES FROM A GRAPEVINE, OR SHRIVELED FIGS FROM A FIG TREE. 5 AND WHEN MY SWORD HAS FINISHED ITS WORK IN THE HEAVENS, IT WILL FALL UPON EDM, THE NATION I HAVE MARKED FOR DESTRUCTION. 6 THE SWORD OF THE LORD IS DRENCHED WITH BLOOD AND COVERED WITH FAT-- WITH THE BLOOD OF LAMBS AND GOATS, WITH THE FAT OF RAMS PREPARED FOR SACRIFICE. YES, THE LORD WILL OFFER A SACRIFICE IN THE CITY OF BOZRAH. HE WILL MAKE A MIGHTY SLAUGHTER IN EDM. 7 EVEN MEN AS STRONG AS WILD OXEN WILL DIE-- THE YOUNG MEN ALONGSIDE THE VETERANS. THE LAND WILL BE SOAKED WITH BLOOD AND THE SOIL ENRICHED WITH FAT.

THIS IS QUITE THE DESCRIPTION OF JUDGMENT AGAINST THE EVIL NATIONS. WE SEE COSMIC SHAKING AND DESTRUCTION. EDM HAD BEEN CRUEL AND EVIL TOWARDS GOD'S PEOPLE AND GOD DOES NOT LEAVE THE GUILTY UNPUNISHED. HEAR THE REST OF THE PROPHECY NOTICE WHY THIS JUDGMENT IS COMING AND HOW THE FINALITY OF IT WILL BE DESCRIBED.

ISAIAH 34:8-15 (NLT) - FOR IT IS THE DAY OF THE LORD'S REVENGE, THE YEAR WHEN EDM WILL BE PAID BACK FOR ALL IT DID TO ISRAEL. 9 THE STREAMS OF EDM WILL BE FILLED WITH BURNING PITCH, AND THE GROUND WILL BE COVERED WITH FIRE. 10 THIS JUDGMENT ON EDM WILL NEVER END; THE SMOKE OF ITS BURNING WILL RISE FOREVER. THE LAND WILL LIE DESERTED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. NO ONE WILL LIVE THERE ANYMORE.

11 IT WILL BE HAUNTED BY THE DESERT OWL AND THE SCREECH OWL, THE GREAT OWL AND THE RAVEN. FOR GOD WILL MEASURE THAT LAND CAREFULLY; HE WILL MEASURE IT FOR CHAOS AND DESTRUCTION. 12 IT WILL BE CALLED THE LAND OF NOTHING, AND ALL ITS NOBLES WILL SOON BE GONE. 13 THORNS WILL OVERRUN ITS PALACES; NETTLES AND THISTLES WILL GROW IN ITS FORTS. THE RUINS WILL BECOME A HAUNT FOR JACKALS AND A HOME FOR OWLS. 14 DESERT ANIMALS WILL MINGLE THERE WITH HYENAS, THEIR HOWLS FILLING THE NIGHT. WILD GOATS WILL BLEAT AT ONE ANOTHER AMONG THE RUINS, AND NIGHT CREATURES WILL COME THERE TO REST. 15 THERE THE OWL WILL MAKE HER NEST AND LAY HER EGGS. SHE WILL HATCH HER YOUNG AND COVER THEM WITH HER WINGS. AND THE BUZZARDS WILL COME, EACH ONE WITH ITS MATE.

THE CITY WILL BE BURNED IN JUDGMENT AND LEFT DESOLATE (AS DESCRIBED BY THE OVERGROWN VEGETATION AND THE ANIMALS LIVING IN WHAT REMAINED). THE JUDGMENT UPON EDM IS DESCRIBED "NEVER ENDING" WITH SMOKE AND BURNING RISING "FOREVER". LOOKING BACK ON OUR REVELATION TEXT WE SEE THIS LANGUAGE BEING USED OF THE BABYLONIAN HARLOT. ITS IMPORTANT TO HIGHLIGHT THIS HERE BECAUSE IT SPEAKS TO THE ETERNITY OF THE JUDGMENT. BABYLON (AND THE BEAST THAT SUPPORTED IT) WILL BE JUDGED. THERE WILL BE NO REBUILDING HER. THERE WILL BE NO SECOND COMING OF THE BEAST. THE *RESULT AND EFFECTS* OF GOD'S JUDGMENT UPON EVIL WILL BE FOREVER AND EVER. HALLELUJAH!

REVELATION 19:4-5 - THIRD VOICE: MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE!

THE THIRD VOICE IS A FAMILIAR VOICE. WE DON'T HAVE LONG TO BE DISTRACTED BY SMOKE RISING BECAUSE THE PRAISE OF GOD IS GOING TO SNUFF THAT RIGHT OUT.

THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS AND FOUR LIVING CREATURES REAPPEAR AND THEY CONTINUE TO PRAISE THE ONE SEATED ON THE THRONE. THIS SERVES AS A SORT OF BOOK END TO THE HEAVENLY SCENE REVELATION OPENS WITH (REVELATION 4). WHEN WE OPENED REVELATION WE PREPARED TO READ

OF AWESOME AND TERRIBLE THINGS - AND WE WERE INVITED TO LOOK IN ON THE HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM. WE SAW A PLACE OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP, UNDISTRACTED BY THE CHAOS OF THE EARTH. THE EARLY CHURCH WAS IN TROUBLE AND TRIALS AND YET HEAVEN WAS NOT WORRIED. THE ULTIMATE REALITY OF GOD BEING ALL POWERFUL AND CONFIDENTLY RULING ON HIS THRONE WAS TO DEMONSTRATE TO THEM (AND US) THAT GOD WAS IN CHARGE.

NOW AS WE ARRIVE AT THE END OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND A VISION ON WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE END OF HISTORY, WE SEE THAT THE ACTIVITY AND OVERARCHING PERSPECTIVE OF HEAVEN - THE WORSHIP OF GOD - IS UNDETERRED AND UNASHAMED AND UNCEASING.

AND IF YOU THOUGHT THAT WE WERE JUST OBSERVERS OF THESE DECLARATIONS OF PRAISE, PASSIVELY READING THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND WATCHING THIS ALL UNFOLD, THE VOICE FROM THE THRONE HAS SOMETHING TO SAY TO YOU AND I: " *GIVE PRAISE TO OUR GOD ALL YOU HIS BOND-SERVANTS, YOU WHO FEAR HIM, THE SMALL AND THE GREAT!* (19:5)." THAT'S AN ORDER FROM THE THRONE OF HEAVEN. WE BETTER GET TO IT! HALLELUJAH!

REVELATION 19:6-10 - FOURTH VOICE: JOY FILLED INVITATION

THE FINAL VOICE OF THIS SECTION AND THE FINAL REASON FOR THE CALL TO PRAISE GOD (HALLELUJAH!) IS AN INVITATION OF CELEBRATION. THE VOICE IS INTENSE, PERHAPS THE MOST INTENSE OF THIS SECTION - JOHN DESCRIBES IT AS "SOMETHING LIKE THE VOICE OF A GREAT MULTITUDE" *AND* "LIKE THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS" *AND* "LIKE THE SOUND OF MIGHTY PEALS OF THUNDER."

THIS VOICE DECLARES THE ROYAL INVITATION FROM THE KING HIMSELF:

"HALLELUJAH! FOR THE LORD OUR GOD, THE ALMIGHTY REIGNS! LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD AND GIVE HIM GLORY FOR THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB HAS COME AND HIS BRIDE HAS MADE HERSELF READY!"

IT MAKES ME THINK OF A FORMAL INVITATION TO A WEDDING. "MR. AND MRS. ARE JOY FILLED TO ANNOUNCE AND REQUEST YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR DAUGHTER JANE AND MR. JOHN SMITH." HERE GOD IS ANNOUNCING THROUGH MIGHTY ANGELIC VOICES THAT HIS SON (THE LAMB) IS THE BRIDEGROOM CELEBRATING HIS LONG AWAITED UNION WITH HIS BRIDE (THE CHURCH). THE BRIDE IS READY AND DRESSED IN FINE, BRIGHT AND PURE LINEN AND IT IS TIME TO CELEBRATE.

NO MORE HARLOT, THE DAYS OF THE BRIDE HAVE COME! AT LAST THE BRIDE AND GROOM COME TOGETHER - THROUGH DAYS AND YEARS OF LONGING AND PREPARATION AND WAITING AND PRAYING, THE WEDDING SUPPER, THE DAY OF CELEBRATION, GLADNESS, LOVE AND JOY IS READY. NO MORE WAITING. NO MORE WAITING. NO MORE BABYLON. NO MORE JUDGMENT. NO MORE BEAST. NO MORE BLOOD. NO MORE LOSS. NO MORE HURTING. NO MORE STRUGGLE. NO MORE SEPARATION. JESUS IS COMING FOR HIS BRIDE. HALLELUJAH!

JOHN IS OVERWHELMED WITH ALL OF THIS AND FALLS TO HIS KNEES BEFORE HIS ANGELIC GUIDE. THE ANGEL DOESN'T MISS A BEAT BUT DEMANDS JOHN NOT DO THAT BUT INSTEAD - WORSHIP GOD! (V. 10). OF COURSE THAT IS WHAT THE ANGEL SAYS - THAT'S WHAT THIS WHOLE CHAPTER IS ABOUT - GOD BEING WORSHIPED AND PRAISED! HEAR THE CALL OF HEAVEN TO JOIN THE WORSHIP OF GOD NOW - FOR HIS EVERLASTING JUDGMENT AGAINST HIS ENEMIES AND FOR THE VICTORY HE HAS BROUGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE - SALVATION, AND POWER AND GLORY BELONG TO OUR GOD (19:1) - GIVE PRAISE TO OUR GOD, ALL YOU HIS BOND-SERVANTS, YOU WHO FEAR HIM, THE SMALL AND THE GREAT (19:5) - "FOR THE LORD OUR GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, REIGNS. (19:6)!"

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