

Hallelujah!

The Smoke From Her Goes Up Forever and Ever

19: 1-5

DIG: In contrast to the silence after the fall of Babylon (18:22), what characterizes the new scene in heaven? Who participates in this praise? What do you learn about God's character?

REFLECT: What are three things for which you are extremely grateful to God? How do you usually express your gratitude to Him about these? How does seeing Babylon defeated (and condemned), and Jesus triumphant (and glorious) affect your overall view of your problems here and now? What is one problem you plan on managing more confidently and joyfully as a result of your study of Revelation?

After the destruction of Babylon and the worldwide reaction that will follow, **the roar of a great multitude** will be heard in heaven. This **great multitude** will consist of Tribulation martyrs, the righteous of the TaNaKh, and New Covenant believers, and the angels. **The Holy Spirit gives us five reasons for heaven's joy.**

First, because full salvation will have come. After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: Hallelujah! The chorus opens with the important word **Hallelujah**, an exclamation of praise to God. The Greek word *Allelouia* is a transliteration of a Hebrew phrase made up of the verb *halal*, meaning *to praise*, and the noun *Yah*, or *God*. So it simply means *praise the Lord*. It appears only here in the New Covenant. Heaven will rejoice because **salvation** will have come for those who believe in **Yeshua** as the **Messiah**. They will cry out: **Glory and power belong to our God (19:1)**.⁴⁰⁵ In days of old, the Shechinah **glory of God, El HaKavod**, appeared in the cloud as a raging fire on Mount Sinai. Just as His **glory** filled the Temple in heaven, it also appears through us who believe today.

Secondly, because justice will have been given out. Those praising ADONAI in heaven will declare His truth and justice because He will have **condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries (Jeremiah 51:48)**. Throughout history God's people have been distressed by the injustice of the world and have longed for His justice to come (**Isaiah 9:6-7**). But the wicked will not get away with their sin forever. When He comes back again, **Jesus** will personally **avenge on her the blood of His servants (Revelation 19:2; Deuteronomy 32:43; Second Thessalonians 1:6-8)**. His judgments are true and just because He gives people what they deserve (**Psalm 119:137**).

Thirdly, because Babylon will have been destroyed. The judgment of **Babylon** caused the first outburst of heavenly rejoicing; however, **her** destruction will prompt the **great multitude** to again shout out: **Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever (19:3)**. The language here is similar to that of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 19:28**), and Edom (**Isaiah 34:10**). **Jeremiah** looked forward to that great day when he said: **then heaven and earth and all that is in them will shout for joy over Babylon, for out of the north destroyers will attack her (Jeremiah 51:48)**.

Fourthly, because God is in control. The **twenty-four elders**, who represent all New Covenant believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, **and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried out: Amen, Hallelujah (19:4)**. This phrase comes from **Psalm 106:48** and points to their intense agreement with the rejoicing over **Babylon's** destruction.

Then a voice came from the throne, saying: Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, both small and great (19:5)! The Bible does not identify who this is, but it is likely an angel, since he refers to **the LORD** as **our God**. All of the redeemed of all time **praise God**. The Psalter looked forward to the day when all could say: **You who fear ADONAI, praise Him! Revere Him, all you descendants of Israel (Psalm 22:23)**.

Fifthly, because of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. How would you feel if you were a part of this **great multitude**? Obviously, you'd be saying to yourself, "What an incredible occasion!" All the celebrations you had attended during your earthly life would be nothing compared to this. For the holy ones will be cheering the fact that their mortal enemy, Satan, is no more. All of the devastation caused by sin, all the havoc wreaked by the powers of darkness will be undone. The battle will be over, and the joyous celebration will continue for all eternity!

But while you might be contemplating how joyful you'll be **in heaven** praising **God** with all the other believers, don't forget about how much joy *heaven* has over you right now! Think back for a moment to when you first came to **the Lord**. You may not have noticed it, but the angels were celebrating. According to **Yeshua's** parable of the lost sheep, there can be no doubt about it: **I tell you that in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent (Luke 15:7)**.

If we are walking in **God's** grace, **He** is very pleased with us. But he knows we stumble, and he's even more pleased with us when we return to **Him (First John 1:9)**. **He** is intimately aware of every move we make and every thought we think; but **He's** not waiting like the Pharisees, ready to trip us up every time we make a mistake. **He** gives us **the Counselor, the Holy Spirit** to correct us when we fall and **teach us all things (John 14:26)**. When we resist temptation and grow in **the knowledge of the truth (First Timothy 2:4)**, **He's** there to cheer us on - along with **a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1)**!

If **heaven** is trying so hard to encourage us, we can be a little more encouraging to ourselves. We don't have to wait until we're at the gates of **heaven** to see the kind of progress we have made. Every time we hold our temper, forgive a neighbor, or restrain from any kind of sin, we have achieved something. When we endure suffering with joy, we have won another battle. When we entrust **God** with a difficult situation and **He** pulls us through it, we have grown in our faith. This is all a part of our process of sanctification, or being **conformed to the likeness of Christ (Ro 8:29)**. It is not merely a superficial conformity, but an internal change. We never reach perfection, but we can become more and more like **Messiah** every day.

The bottom line is that our spiritual life should not consist of concentrating on our failures! While we are always to remember that it's **God** who wins our victories, we should rejoice in them, however small, for they are fulfilling **His** promise to us, **that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:6)**.

*Thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your grace at work in my life. Help me to see how I can do better, but also show me how far I have come. May I never forget that Your Holy Spirit is truly alive in me.*⁴⁰⁶