



# *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*

*"The Four Alleluias of the Apocalypse"*

19:1-6

## Introduction

A lot of preparation can go into planning a wedding. The larger the wedding, the more preparation is required.

The relationship of the church to Jesus is often compared to that of a bride betrothed and awaiting the return of her Bridegroom.

Jesus told His closest disciples,

John 14:2 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.

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

All Jews, they would have caught the reference to the Jewish wedding customs.

If you're not familiar with him, I'd highly recommend Bible teacher and author Arnold Fruchtenbaum. He's a completed Jew and a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. He's done extensive research and writing on Israel in the Bible and on the typology of Jewish customs. I'm indebted to him in describing the wedding customs.

The first step in the Jewish wedding system was the arrangement in which the father of the groom arranged the match with the father of the bride and paid him the bride price. This stage could occur when the bride and groom were yet children, and often the betrothed would not even meet each other until the day of the wedding.

The application to God's program is that God the Father, the Father of the Groom, made the arrangement and, then, paid the bride price. The bride price was the blood of His Son. As Ephesians 5:25 states: *Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it.*; And in John 3:16: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...*

The second step in the Jewish wedding system was known as the preparation. This was the period of the betrothal. It lasted for at least one year but could last much longer if, for example, the arrangement was made when the bride and groom were children. During the period of the preparation, the bride was prepared to be a fitting wife for her mate. It was also the period of time in which she was observed for her purity, which is why the betrothal always lasted for a minimum of one year – to allow at least a full nine months to pass to make certain that the bride was a virgin at the time of the betrothal.

The application of the stage of the preparation to the Bride of Christ, the Church, is that the Bride is even now in the process of being perfected for the Groom. In Second Corinthians 11:2 we read, *For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.*

On the wedding day the groom would leave his home and go to the bride's home to fetch her. The application to the fetching of the Bride of Christ is the Rapture of the Church.

The Jewish ceremony was conducted in the home of the groom. Only a few – usually the immediate family and two witnesses – were invited to come in and observe the wedding ceremony.

The application of this fourth step to the relationship of the Church as the Bride of Christ is that there will be a ceremony in Heaven, and the few that will be invited to this ceremony are the few that will already be in Heaven. Only those who have already been resurrected will be able to participate in the wedding ceremony.

Whereas only a few were invited to the Jewish wedding ceremony, many more were invited to the marriage feast – to celebrate the marriage of the son. As we read deeper into chapter nineteen of the Revelation we see the Marriage Feast, or Supper, of Jesus on the earth in His Second Coming.

The first six verses of chapter nineteen remind us of the centuries of preparation that have gone into getting ready for the wedding ceremony and the Marriage Supper.

Revelation 19:1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

“After these things” looks back over the first eighteen chapters:

- After the vision of the risen Lord Jesus in chapter one.
- After the revealing of the church age in chapters two and three.
- After the rapture and reward of the church in chapters four and five.
- After the wrath of the seven year Great Tribulation on earth.
- *Jesus Christ will come forth with His wedded bride!*

There are a “great multitude” in Heaven. There are all the saints of the church age, from the Day of Pentecost until the Rapture. There are also multitudes of believers who were justified by faith in the Old Testament. There are the martyred of the Great Tribulation.

Their “loud voice” reminds me of the modern custom of having an announcer, a DJ, announce the arrival of the wedding party to the supper.

“Salvation” belongs to the Lord. It is His salvation and is offered freely by grace to all who receive Jesus. “Glory and honor and power” belong to Him, too, although in the church age they are held

in abeyance. But at this Second Coming they will be unveiled and applied.

Revelation 19:2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."

Revelation 19:3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

These two verses summarize chapters seventeen and eighteen. There you saw God burn Babylon - both the religious system of chapter seventeen and the rebuilt city of chapter eighteen.

"True and righteous are His judgments." God has the reputation among nonbelievers for being haphazard in His judgments. The things that happen to people don't seem to make sense. Good people, young people, suffer tragedies while the wicked prosper.

Those aren't God's "judgments," per se. We live in a fallen world. Sin is responsible for the haphazardness we witness and we are sinners. God is working through history to redeem and restore His creation.

When God does judge, He is always "true" to His holy and loving nature. His judgments are always just right.

As the Lord Jesus returns with His glorified bride there is a contrast with the harlot. It is as if the Holy Spirit is inviting you to compare the two, to see them both as they truly are.

Today we don't see the church in all her finished glory. As members of the church we are in the world and can grow weary and discouraged. The world can seem so attractive and is, in every sense, a seductive harlot.

Remember you are betrothed. Your Groom is coming at any moment! Don't be led astray, to make shipwreck, by the harlot.

Too many believers are like Ulysses in his desire to hear the Sirens. These had power of charming by their song all who heard them so that mariners were impelled to cast themselves into the sea to destruction. Ulysses directed his men to stop their ears with wax so that they should not hear the Siren's song. He had himself bound to the mast and ordered the sailors that, whatever he might say or do, by no means to release him till they should have passed the Sirens' island. As they approached the Sirens' island, the sea was calm, and over the waters came notes of music so ravishing and attractive that Ulysses struggled to get loose and, by cries and signs to his people, begged to be released. But they, obedient to his previous orders, sprang forward and bound him still faster. They held on their course, and the music grew fainter till it ceased to be heard, when with joy Ulysses gave his companions the signal to unseal their ears; and they relieved him from his bonds.

It's a story which teaches us we can enjoy all the seduction with none of the consequences. But remember: It's a myth! And so are all the ways we think we can indulge the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life without spiritual harm.

Revelation 19:4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"

The "twenty-four elders" is the name given to the church in heaven in this book. We did a detailed study of this back in chapter four. We showed how the number "twenty-four" is a representative number in Scripture. We showed that these elders must be men and not angels. And we showed that the most likely representative group of men in Heaven at that time was the resurrected and raptured believers of the church age.

The church - you and I who are believers - is raptured and rewarded prior to the Great Tribulation.

The "four living creatures" are angels called cherubim who lead the worship around God's throne.

Revelation 19:5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

Keep in mind the wedding customs. The focus is on the Bridegroom and the bride.

"All" the rest in Heaven take an honored place as attendants, as "servants," with varying responsibilities. "Small and great" might be a reference to those still on the earth and to other creatures in Heaven and on the earth and even inanimate things. In Psalm 148:7-13 you read,

Psalms 148:7 Praise the Lord from the earth, You great sea creatures and all the depths;

Psalms 148:8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;

Psalms 148:9 Mountains and all hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars;

Psalms 148:10 Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying fowl;

Psalms 148:11 Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth;

Psalms 148:12 Both young men and maidens; Old men and children.

Psalms 148:13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven.

Everything that has breath, and perhaps some things that do not, will praise the Lord at His coming.

Revelation 19:6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

Jesus and His bride emerge from their wedding in Heaven to be seated at the Marriage Supper on the earth. In addition to being a marriage celebration, His Second Coming is also a coronation. He is returning with us to rule and reign over the earth for a thousand years.

We'll see Jesus overcoming all natural and supernatural foes. He will, indeed, be "the Lord God Omnipotent" who "reigns."

Four times in these six verses someone says “Alleluia!” It means “praise the Lord!” This is its only occurrence in the New Testament. It is the cry of the final victory.

I especially like it being paired in verse four by the church with “Amen!” “Amen” is a word of agreement, sometimes translated *so be it*.

The Marines have “ooh-rah” - often barked when troops want to voice approval or a sense of esprit de corps. Its full meaning is primal and difficult to define, for it also echoes the hardships faced by those in uniform.

“Amen! Alleluia!” ought to be our daily rallying cry. Knowing all we know about eternity and the world to come; awaiting the imminent return of Jesus; facing incredible hardships as we head homeward to Heaven; we can shout “Amen! Alleluia!” - “So be it! Praise the Lord!”

Jesus is in Heaven preparing for Revelation nineteen. He’s building you and I our mansions. It reminded me of a story I heard when visiting Avalon on Catalina Island, the island of romance.

The Holly Hill House was built in the late 1800's almost single handedly by Peter Gano using his horse, Mercury, to haul large timbers and lumber. There are any number of versions to the story of his building the house. One is that it was to become home for him and his betrothed who lived on the mainland. But the home took so long to complete that the bride-to-be found another lover.

Let’s not find the world to be another lover because Jesus is delaying His return. Let’s remain pure, virginal, spiritually speaking.

**It will be worth the wait!**