

Beulah Baptist Church - Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor
Sunday School Lesson - Rejoicing in Heaven - November 21, 2021
Rev. Mark A. Seals - Minister of Christian Education
Brother Michael Moore - Superintendent of Sunday School
Deacon Joseph and Deaconess Melissa Holloman – Osler Class Teacher/Facilitator

Lesson: Rejoicing in Heaven - Printed Text: Revelation 19:1-8
Devotional Reading – Revelation 5:1-14

I. Aim for Change / Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, we will:

- A. **DISCUSS** believers' understanding of the implication of God's judgment,
- B. **BELIEVE** that God's judgment is inclusive of God's justice and mercy, and
- C. **ENJOY** the love of Christ for all.

Vocabulary Words You Should Know

Alleluia – The Greek spelling of Hallelujah, a Hebrew phrase meaning “Praise Yahweh!”.

Avenged -. Meted out righteous justice

Grace – God giving us what we do not deserve.

Mercy – God not giving us what we rightly deserve

Unifying Principle—Family Restored. People want to have victory over the wicked people in their lives and in the world. How will they find victory over the wicked? God has the final judgment of the world, and God is worthy of all praise.

Key Verse “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.” (*Revelation 19:7, KJV*)

The People, Places, and Times

Bride. The imagery of the bride is used widely in the Bible as a description of the people of God. In the Old Testament, the prophets presented Israel (the Old Testament Church) as a bride who had committed repeated adulteries (Jeremiah 3; Ezekiel 16; Hosea 3). The prophets also proclaimed that God was faithful to His unfaithful bride and would restore her (Jeremiah 33:10-11); Isaiah 61:10; 62:5). In the Book of Revelation, bride imagery is used often of the Church (New Testament Israel) and her relationship to Christ. The bride belongs to Christ, who is the bridegroom (John 3:29). In Revelation 21, the great wedding is portrayed with the Church prepared for her Bridegroom (vv.2,9).

II. Background

All of Revelation 18 is about the fall and destruction of Babylon. Throughout Revelation, John uses Babylon as emblematic of all evil empires, powers, and people. John's immediate audience in Revelation was the faithful Christ followers of his day, being persecuted and marginalized by the Roman Empire. Here in Revelation 19, John gives us a window into a future event in heaven where a “great multitude” is gathered in worship and praise of God for what He has done for them, and what He has done to those who have done evil.

The Lesson At-A-Glance

1. The Demise of the Prostitute (Revelation 19:1-3)
2. The Beautiful Bride (vv. 4-8)

III. In Depth with More Light on the Text

1. The Demise of the Prostitute (Revelation 19:1-3)

God's people in heaven praise God and worship Him for having brought judgment and destruction on Babylon, "the great prostitute" (v.2, NLT). God's justice can be viewed as a two-sided coin. God's ultimate judgment of his enemies is one side of God's justice. His mercy and grace toward those who follow Him is the other.

God warns again and again that all sin must be punished (Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23).

Each time God declares sinners must die, He follows that with an offer of eternal life if the sinner will turn away from their sins and follow Him (Ezekiel 18:21-22; John 3:16; Romans 6:23).

2. The Beautiful Bride (vv. 4-8)

The next verses describe those same people praising God in worship for what he has done for them, specifically bringing them into his presence for the wedding supper of the Lamb in which they are the bride, holy and spotless. This section shows the other side of the coin of God's justice, His mercy and grace, again because of His great love. In all cultures, weddings are a time of great joy for all involved. Weddings are also a time of new beginnings, and a time when the couple commit to a permanent joint bond.

A bride who is preparing for her wedding will wash herself carefully and thoroughly and put on a beautiful new white dress. Jesus has done this for His faithful. He has cleansed the Church by taking their sin on Himself. Jesus paid the price of our sin on the Cross, bearing our punishment, so that we could be made holy and blameless in His sight.

God shows mercy and grace when we declare our faith in and allegiance to Him. His righteousness is given to us, and we can be presented to Him in a radiant new white linen gown. Is that not reason for joyful worship and loud hallelujah?

Discuss the Meaning

These verses show clearly that God's judgment includes two distinct elements. He will judge, condemn, and destroy all who reject Him, and do evil. He also will show mercy and grace to all who follow him. He is just and right in doing all this. How does knowing this affect your efforts to pray for and show the love of God to others who may not yet know Him?

Liberating Lesson

We often struggle with our desire to get even with those who oppress us. Sometimes it seems that there is no justice for marginalized communities. We must find comfort in the first three verses here where we learn that God will exact vengeance for us in the end. He will judge all the world's evil people and systems. He will deliver on His promise to effect judgment on those who oppress His people.

Application for Activation

It is so hard to turn the other cheek when we see injustice around us. God's word and his love should guide our responses to injustice. Our actions should show the world the grace and mercy that have been shown to us. We can show our desire for justice through peaceful protest, not through violence and vengeance.

Questions

1. To what extent can human society exact godly judgments?
2. How do you react to the imagery of being a bride to Christ?
3. What systems and empires today act against God's people as Babylon and Rome did?
4. In the reading of Revelation 19:2-3, how does this affect your understanding of God's justice?

Notes: _____

