

November 11, 2012
“Choose a Happy Ending”
Revelation 19:1-20:15

Have you ever been to a sporting event and heard the massive crowd shouting out the same thing all together as one? Like “A-Rod, A-Ro...” well maybe not A-Rod. (I read that someone said Hurricane Sandy should have been named hurricane A-Rod then it couldn't hit anything). Maybe a better example is when the Jets fans shout, “J-E-T-S, Jets, Jets, Jets.”

Revelation 19 begins with John hearing what sounded like a mighty shout of a great crowd. This crowd is in heaven, and what they were shouting was, “Hallelujah (praise the Lord)! Salvation and glory (splendor and majesty) and power (dominion and authority) [belong] to our God!” Well, I don't think they were shouting all of that, but that's what they meant.

In the first 6 verses of our text a crowd, 100's – 1,000's of times larger than one arena shout “Hallelujah” four different times. This is the only place in the New Testament where the word "hallelujah" is found. It occurs in verses 1, 3, 4, and 6. The word is derived from a combination of two Hebrew words, halal and Jah, meaning "Praise Yahweh" or "Praise God." The word can be found in the Old Testament in many places, especially in the Psalms. But in the New Testament this is the only place it is found; shouted at the end of time, by those who had found salvation in Christ.

How about a little Heaven Choir practice? If we are going to be shouting hallelujah in heaven we might as well practice now, right? So on the count of three let's shout, “Hallelujah” four times. Remember what it means, it is our expression of praise to the God of our salvation.

Praise is the heartfelt response to God by those who love Him. The more you get to know God and realize what he has done, the more you will respond with praise. Praise is at the heart of true worship. Let your praise of God flow out of your realization of who he is and how much he loves you. Are you ready? 1-2-3: “Hallelujah!” “Hallelujah!” “Hallelujah!” “Hallelujah!” - It will sound even better in heaven.

Key Thought: The end is coming. No one knows the exact time, so don't believe anyone who tells you they know, but the end is coming. “The end will be good news for some, bad news for others.

Lawyer: I have some good news and some bad news

Client: Well, give me the bad news first.

Lawyer: The bad news is that the DNA tests show that your blood was found all over the crime scene.

Client: Oh no! I'm ruined! What's the good news?

Lawyer: Your cholesterol was down to 130!

Well, today I have good news for some and bad news for others when it comes to the end of time. First the good news:

1. A happy ending
 - a. At the end, evil will be defeated once and for all (19:11; 20:10).

Revelation 19:11

Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. And the one sitting on the horse was named Faithful and True. For he judges fairly and then goes to war.

Just after the shouting of Hallelujah Jesus appears, not as a Lamb, but as a Warrior on a white horse (symbolizing victory). Jesus came first as a Lamb to be a sacrifice for sin, but He will return as a Conqueror and King to execute judgment.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power when he comes to receive glory and praise from his holy people. And you will be among those praising him on that day, for you believed what we testified about him.

Jesus' first coming brought forgiveness; His second will bring judgment. The battle lines had been drawn between God and evil, and we await our conquering King to ride onto the battlefield. You know who wins don't you?

Revelation 20:10

Then the Devil, who betrayed them, was thrown into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Evil will be defeated once and for all. And ...

- b. For Jesus' followers, there is joy and celebration
For on that very day when Christ comes, He will be exalted by His followers and celebrated by all who believe — (19:1-10).

After this, I heard the sound of a vast crowd in heaven shouting, "Hallelujah! Salvation is from our God. Glory and power belong to him alone. 2 His judgments are just and true. He has punished the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and he has avenged the murder of his servants." 3 Again and again their voices rang, "Hallelujah! The smoke from that city ascends forever and forever!"

4 Then the twenty-four elders and the four living beings fell down and worshiped God, who was sitting on the throne. They cried out, "Amen! Hallelujah!"

5 And from the throne came a voice that said, "Praise our God, all his servants, from the least to the greatest, all who fear him."

6 Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a huge crowd, or the roar of mighty ocean waves, or the crash of loud thunder: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. 8 She is permitted to wear the finest white linen." (Fine linen represents the good deeds done by the people of God.)

9 And the angel said, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he added, "These are true words that come from God."

10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, "No, don't worship me. For I am a servant of God, just like you and other brothers and sisters who testify of their faith in Jesus. Worship God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus."

The good news is that there is going to be a happy ending. Evil will be defeated, there will be joy and celebration for the followers of Jesus, and there will be ...

c. The wedding feast of the lamb

Revelation 19:7

Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself.

Do you know who this bride of Christ is? It's us! The Church! All true believers. This is the culmination of human history -- the judgment of the wicked and the wedding of the Lamb and His bride, the church. His bride has prepared herself, how

Revelation 19:8

She is permitted to wear the finest white linen." (Fine linen represents the good deeds done by the people of God.)

The church are those who have received Jesus Christ and are clothed with His righteousness; and manifest that righteousness as it is worked out daily in godly living.

There is going to be a happy ending. Evil will be defeated, there will be joy and celebration for the followers of Jesus, especially at the wedding feast of Christ and His Bride, the church. But, there is also ...

2. A sad ending

a. Satan and his followers will be judged (20:11-15).

And I saw a great white throne, and I saw the one who was sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. 12 I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to the things written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 The sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the grave gave up the dead in them. They were all judged according to their deeds. 14 And death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death--the lake of fire. 15 And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

This describes the last judgment. All people, believers and non-believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ who is God. Another place you can read about that judgment from Jesus' own words is in Matthew 25:31-46. At the last judgment books will be open, books that record our deeds good and bad, our deeds can't save us, but God is interested in our deeds and will reward believers according to their deeds. Books will be open and included in those books is one very important book, The Book of Life. This is the book that records the names of all those who have accepted Christ's gift of salvation. Those whose names are not in that book are thrown into the lake of fire...

b. But Jesus' followers will be saved.

Acts 10:43

He (Jesus) is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name."

Romans 10:9

For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Yes, there will be a sad ending, but there is also a happy ending. Most movies have a happy ending, usually fairytales end with, "and they lived happily ever after." If you had a choice, wouldn't you choose a happy ending? Well, you have that choice. Our scripture today talks about a happy ending and a sad ending, but what is ...

3. Your ending?

a. Which kind will it be?

Overview: The main point of this passage is that in the end, evil will be defeated (19:11-20:10). The Cross has won over sin and evil. Another reality of the end is judgment (20:11-15). That's what the "book of life" symbolizes. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved (Romans 3:23; 5:8; 10:9).

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Romans 5:8

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 10:9

For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

For those who are in Christ, the end of the world will be a time of joy and celebration (19:1-10). In his vision, John saw a magnificent wedding with Jesus (the Lamb) as the groom and the church as his bride (19:7). They are all who accepted Christ's gift of salvation, who believed in Him and lived a life totally devoted to Him. Their names are recorded in the book of life, they chose a happy ending.

Challenge: Now is the time to make sure your name is written in the book of life.