

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas, Sunday, February 28, 2016

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God".

(Revelation 19:17)

For the past two weeks -- and yet again today -- I have been helped by the Holy Spirit to bring some disciplined light to the words written touching upon a substantive matter of conclusion for this earth's inhabitants. It is a conclusion that I continue to have strong unctioin will be shortly upon us -- but no matter when; it is certain to be as full of "endings" as Genesis is of "beginnings". And it ends ... friends of my soul ... with a supper.

The English language strains to give words sufficient to declare the magnificence of this event where the Superlative of Righteousness, in matchless might and dominion comes forth from His seat of heavenly glory to

"[...] miserably destroy those wicked men, and ... let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." (Matthew 21:41)

So many prophecies, preachments, and parables point to this event and find their perfect fulfillment in it, that it very properly holds in the hearts and minds of His people -- I dare say the whole of mankind, if truth were known -- the greatest and most terrifying significance. For Paul tells us plainly:

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them." (Romans 1:19)

Can there be a matter much more compelling of all that can ***"be known of God"*** than the final act in putting Christ into possession of His kingdom? Every man knows there is an Apocalypse and an Armageddon coming!

But when you read in this portion of John's vision of Christ's Revelation -- you have some things that hold quite a lot of attention; and yet are not altogether easily parsed out in relation to the greater events of Christ's return, Antichrist's rise, the siege and slaughter of the rebellious house of Israel, and the resolution of this great competition between the imposter and the true Christ at Armageddon. Nevertheless, they hold a place in the faithful report of John's preceptor ... and no analysis of the case can ignore them.

For example, two weeks ago, a dear sister in this house approached me upon the conclusion of my sermon and asked me flat out: "What do we make of the destruction of Babylon?" No doubt, it takes a significant part of the chapters of Revelation 16, 17, 18, and 19 -- so it clearly has amplitude. But do

we have it in proper view? More importantly, if we did ... would it then properly hold its significance in our joyful considerations of this momentous period? I say yea ... and a thousand times amen!

I have read so many words on the import of this figure of vile blasphemy and abominations – where one man after another strains himself to out-imagine her. Some, I must in sincerity confess and joyfully report, have given very good insight -- but their words fall short because when past world events stop sustaining their analysis ... they move on to speculation.

An example of this speculation-gone-wild is in our good friend John Gill's obsession with the notion that the Roman Empire – indeed the city of Rome itself – will explode back into a world empire to which all of the nations will depend for their own wealth. Another example, Seiss – though he is heavily burdened with American Lutheran Arminianism in his writing – does an excellent examination of this whore. But he then falters when he goes to insisting (through speculation as to how it will come to pass) that the actual city of Babylon must again rise to international preeminence! Yes – right over there in the near dead center of Iraq. And, I suppose these words of John make reference to the Persian Gulf?

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.”

(Revelation 18:21)

This leaves me cold, because God is no more limited – based on how much providence has been revealed – in His ability to show His people what He intends, than He is limited in His distribution of salvation by the faithless darkness in the hearts of most of mankind! I say to the former concept what Paul says to the latter: ***“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar”.*** (Romans 3:4). There is no more requirement to conclude that this Babylon intimates a real locale than it is necessary to conclude that the ***“five cities in the land of Egypt”***, one of which ***“shall be called, The city of destruction,”*** means there will be a specific location bearing that official name. It is a metaphoric collection of humans who have common interests and values.

Babylon is a whore! And, as every whore – she ***“will hunt for the precious life.”*** (Proverbs 6:26). Her character, as intimated in the first descriptive vision of her within the Apocalypse, includes many indicators of how we are to understand with whom we are dealing:

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written,

**MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of
Jesus:" (Revelation 17: 1-6)**

She is borne on the back of Satan. She's fully supported by every inhabitant of the earth – who pour out to her their wealth in exchange for her affections toward them; without discerning the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 11:29). Governments grant her their power, and codify her foul blasphemies against God. Her wealth makes her at once the recipient of all nations' and peoples' praise and adoration -- and the source of great commerce for those same nations and peoples.

"They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom." (Ezekiel 16:33)

... and ...

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Revelation 18:3)

Let us consider a brief moment the passage that tells us of what these merchants wax rich in the practice of providing this whore with her delicacies:

"The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." (Revelation 18:12-13)

This whore is as prodigious in her reproduction -- through the construction and maintenance of every form of ridiculous center for worshipping false gods -- as she is in spewing forth her instruction in abominable sexual practices for all the earth's inhabitants to know and love.

"For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree." (1 Kings 14:23)

These churches, abbeys, temples, basilicas, monasteries, nunneries, mosques -- structures of every form and size -- are costly to build. They are costly to maintain. They are costly to fill with every form of idol and odor and accoutrement that can be conceived to perpetuate the worship of the false deity honored therein. And, can you question the proposition that they are filled with slaves and the purchased souls of men?

She sits presently ***“the lady of kingdoms”*** (Isaiah 47:5), and imagines that she sits ***“a queen”*** (Revelation 18:7) – because she is convinced by all of the wealth she possesses and power she wields that she will replace that beautiful woman who is her antithesis (Revelation 12:1) and that she will be queen of the earth!

This beastly bimbo comes to this closing hour in the history of Satan’s predominance with great swagger. Whoredoms and abominations rule the world! Who better, then, to sit in the throne as its queen than this monstrous ***“MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”***? But a queen she is not. Because a virgin she is not!

Christ has an event scheduled. An event that is inextricably linked to Armageddon; in the passage that is without question the most direct treatment of the battle at Armageddon that exists in all of Scripture. Consider these words:

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.” (Revelation 19:1-2)

... then BANG!! ...

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 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. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.” (Revelation 19:6-9)

... then BANG!! ...

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” (Revelation 19:11)

Do not these words require us to put these three amazing events together? Yeah it does! So I say ... Christ has an event scheduled. It’s time for the marriage of the Lamb!

“And he that is the high priest among his brethren, ... shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.” (Leviticus 21:10, 13-14)

Christ is **"made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."** (Hebrews 6:20). Christ is not going to marry a whore! He likewise will not marry a **"divorced woman"**, which expressly rules out the Jews!

"Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away." (Isaiah 50:1)

Christ has a virgin bride -- and she has made herself ready! This imposing, imperious whore must be put down! She must be deposed from her vaunted throne -- that whorish replica of the blessed Bride of Christ -- the Heavenly Jerusalem!

"The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock." (Nahum 3:3-6)

Once she has been put down -- oh glorious day !! I say, once she has been put down -- at the direction of the narcissistic Antichrist who will have no worship of any but himself (Revelation 13:15-16) -- we turn our attention to this next sublime installment of this **"great and dreadful day of the LORD"** (Malachi 4:5) ... the wedding of the Lamb. It is clear that there are many appointed to be in attendance at this great, celebratory event, including the two chief persons prophesied of:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet." (Joel 2:15-16)

We know the bridegroom is the **"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"** (Revelation 13:8). Who, precisely is this bride here shown coming forth from her place of repose (closet)? Is it not the redeemed Church of whom Paul speaks to the Ephesians as the mysterious fulfillment of the human bond of righteous marriage (Ephesians 5:32)? Is this not the body that Paul spoke these words to the church at Corinth about?

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2)

The New Testament Church -- founded by Christ on the banks of Jordan -- is certainly this bride, as we see time and again intimately described, and closely associated with the perfection of human marriage bonds, in the words of the Apostle.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."
(Ephesians 5:23-32)

And the New Testament church is expressly called "***the heavenly Jerusalem***" (Hebrews 12:22), and "***new Jerusalem***" (Revelation 3:12), which is the name of that place to which the Gentile Saints were taken up when the seventh trumpet began to sound (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

I need to address a matter of terms ... a matter of offices ... a matter of relationships here to ensure my beloved in this house are not confused by writings found in prophecy about another relationship. Though there are many, let me use this one example to drive home my point.

" And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi [i.e., Husband]; and shalt call me no more Baali [i.e., this false, pretentious 'Yahweh' the Jews fraudulently use for God]. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD." (Hosea 2:16-20)

This thrice-referenced betrothal means that an engagement has taken place. Typically, in the Jewish economy, a betrothal occurs about a year before the marriage. The betrothed is considered to be the wife of the man to whom she is betrothed, even though the marriage has not yet occurred. In this passage, the LORD is betrothing the redeemed 144,000 to Himself -- and the language of the passage shows it is directly in the context of Armageddon!

For this reason, the expositors find confusion in the Revelation 19 passage -- leading them to conclude that this marriage of the Lamb includes the redeemed of the Jews. I don't believe Scripture can bear that out ... but there is no need to be confused on the point.

We have the parable of the ten virgins -- five wise and five foolish. But, as the text of that parable demonstrates ... these do not represent the bride, but those who go **"forth to meet the bridegroom"** (Matthew 25:1). Though we have read the cautions in this parable to indicate our need to maintain trimmed lamps as we wait for the return of Christ -- and that is no doubt a valid consideration in that parable -- it is primarily to signify the distinction between the righteous and unrighteous Jews! Those 144,000 who maintain their virginity will **"follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth"** (Revelation 14:4), including **"in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."** (Matthew 25:10)

If these five wise virgins are the redeemed Jews -- how can they likewise be part of the Bride? Definitions begin to get into the path, and we lose ourselves in confusion. Confusion is the opposite of edification. We need to be clear!

The answer, I submit, is in understanding the offices of the Trinity -- and the names given to the members thereof. In simple terms, we must understand that God the father betrothed the Jewish nation to wife -- of course in metaphor. That nation committed whoredoms against her husband -- before there could be consummation, robbing her of her virgin state -- which resulted in His giving her a bill of divorcement. In the exemplary passage out of Hosea (quoted above), it is the LORD (all capital letters) that is the acting office of the Trinity. LORD intimates Jehovah ... or God the Father.

God the Son -- the office of the Christ, the Goel, the Redeemer -- was espoused to the New Testament Church. He is the Lamb of God, who was slain according to the Covenant of Grace. It is the **"marriage of the Lamb"** to which we are looking in Revelation 19 -- although it is clear from the passage in Hosea that this same battle brings forward the redeemed Jews to go **"in with [Christ] to the marriage"**, where they will be again betrothed to their husband, the LORD.

These are all symbolic events, and ultimately express the bond between God (Father and Son) and the elect (Jews and Gentiles -- Old and New Testaments) that is celebrated at the **"supper of the great God"**!

This virgin is prepared -- the great harlot having been eaten alive and burned with fire by her votaries (Revelation 17:16) -- to be presented to Christ in the solemnities of marriage. She is **"arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."** (Revelation 19:8), and in the perfection of the type throughout Holy Scripture -- as uttered from the beginning -- **"they shall be one"** (Genesis 2:24) for all eternity.

Yet the marriage ceremony is only a part of this great coronation event. There is other business here. The great supper! The Lord's Wedding Supper!

"Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S

sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel." (Zephaniah 1:7-8)

This is the Lord's wedding supper -- an invitation-only party thrown for Him by His Father, even God! The newlyweds are the proper focus of the event. Christ in His glory -- the bride, adorned in her robe of righteousness, admiring her beloved.

"When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thessalonians 1:10)

Yet, here comes the king of blasphemy -- the false suitor who is energized by that great adversary and interloper Satan. He has pursued the fledgling remnant atop Mt. Zion, with an army of the ***"kings of the earth and of the whole world"*** (Revelation 16:14). His efforts have been frustrated ... the nuptials between Christ and His Bride have been accomplished, and the celebration has been brought to commencement. These ***"princes, and the king's children, and all as are clothed with strange apparel"*** -- coming into this great banqueting event ***"not having a wedding garment"***!

The transcendent language utilized throughout prophetic scripture -- to define the severity of the slaughter that will take place in this ***"valley of decision"*** -- makes the flesh weary and numb. Here are just a few examples:

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." (Revelation 14:20)

This picture is of miles (length and width) of land so filled with blood that it not only soaks the ground, but after that flows sufficient to cause those horses -- upon which Christ and His armies ride -- to stand bridle deep in it. Expositors suggest that this language is hyperbole, and indeed intends 1,600 miles, rather than furlongs to express the severity of it. How horrifying!

"Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." (Joel 3:12-15)

... and ...

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:18-20)

In addition to slaughter in the valley, we have the natural world veritably closing her eyes lest her light might shine upon so great a slaughter. What infinite accent to horror is there in human experience more than that you cannot see your slaughter coming? What does the parable say of the man who deigned to enter into the wedding without a wedding garment? **"cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13)**, where, of course all of the **"children of the kingdom"** (Matthew 8:12) of Antichrist will find themselves (Revelation 16:10).

"And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth." (Zechariah 14:12)

So many more are written of, such that we could fill this and many sermons simply quoting and commenting on them. It is sufficient to know that it will be a great slaughter that will remove from all the nations of the earth their military capacities during the millennial reign of Christ. And that reign -- that kingdom -- that amazing work of God that will bring Eden's beauty to full -- is also a subject that deserves exhaustive treatment, but is only tangential to this sermon series.

The work that remains here today is one of bringing this great slaughter event to your hearts in a most comforting reality. Many things I have spoken today hints at it, but it is time to say a thing as plainly as it can be said, so that we here in this house can be the more fully assured in the performance of Christ's ordinance.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." (Revelation 14:13-19)

I previously quoted verse 20 of this passage ... which was the last verse of this specific oracle, and which clearly references the engagement of heavenly powers preparing for and executing the events at Armageddon. I have for years been perplexed by the language in this oracle that seemed in every

respect to be redundant -- making use of two distinct metaphors for the execution of the same judgment: Harvest and Vintage.

But remembering that God dwells in eternity -- that He declares "***the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done,***" (Isaiah 46:10) -- there is no need to further be perplexed. That same God -- or more specifically in this instance, that same Christ -- that established the ordinance for the New Testament church, as a symbol that he undertook to have his body broken and his blood shed for the remission of our sins -- would bring that symbol to full fruition. Christ told the disciples -- and through them the Church:

"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29)

So, reading this prophecy of John about the harvest being reaped -- as Christ spoke in parable (Matthew 13:24-30) -- and the vintage grapes gathered is no longer redundant. It is clear that he uses these metaphors to bring the two components of this blessed ordinance to full at the wedding supper: The harvest wheat for the bread and the vintage grapes for the wine. It is, after all, the Lord's Supper that is brought to the guests who have been invited to attend after the wedding of the Lamb! Christ will, indeed, join us for this blessed -- though horrible for the slain -- event! And, let us not be queasy about the blood of the slain. Are we not told in the prophecy of David:

"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." (Psalms 58:10)

Is this not a perfect and refreshing view of what brother Charles shared with us just last week, while we observed this ordinance?

Armageddon is the site of a glorious coming event -- in which every elect soul will take some part. Taken properly into view, it is filled with comforts for us, as it is filled with hope for the 144,000 Jews who will be there betrothed again to God, as a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham thousands of years ago. I hope I have opened this event up for you to see and enjoy and explore for more and greater edification. I have only opened it. You should every one look more fully into it, and get to yourselves confidence in speaking about these coming times when we will enjoy the company of our Lord -- our Husband -- our Redeemer and take with Him the Lord's Supper in His Father's kingdom.

I love you all. Amen.