



Heavenly Hallelujahs

The First Song of Heaven After the Fall of Babylon.

Revelation 19:1-6, *After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power belong to the Lord our God!"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."³ Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"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!"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!"*

Passage Overview.

Verses	Content
V 1–2	The First Hallelujah — Salvation, Glory, Honour, and Power
V 3	The Second Hallelujah — The Smoke Rises Forever

Verses	Content
V 4	The Third Hallelujah — The Elders and Living Creatures Worship
V 5	The Voice from the Throne — The Call to Praise
V 6	The Fourth Hallelujah — The Lord God Omnipotent Reigns

INTRODUCTION

✦ The End of the Long Silence — Berlin, November 9, 1989

Just before midnight on **November 9, 1989**, a spokesman for the **East German government** announced, almost accidentally, that citizens could cross the Berlin Wall freely — effective immediately. Within hours, thousands of people were climbing the Wall, embracing strangers, weeping in the streets. The Wall that had divided a city, separated families, and killed over 140 people who tried to cross it, was being hammered apart by jubilant crowds with pickaxes.

A journalist who was there that night later wrote: *'I have covered wars, disasters, and tragedies. I have never in my life heard anything like the sound of that crowd. It was not the sound of celebration. It was the sound of people who had stopped believing something could ever end, suddenly realising it had ended. It was the sound of people who had been waiting for a very long time.'*

That is the sound of **Revelation 19:1–6**.

For **eighteen chapters**, the people of God have endured the beast, the harlot, the bowl judgments, the persecution, the martyrdom, the silence of the altar.

And now Babylon has fallen. The long night is over. And the multitude of heaven cannot contain themselves.

What John hears in verse 1 is not a polished choir rehearsing an anthem. It is the spontaneous eruption of a people who had stopped believing this moment would ever come — and it has come. This is the sound of heaven the morning after Babylon burns.

Revelation 19 is the great hinge of the Apocalypse.

Everything before it has been moving toward this moment. Everything after it flows from it.

- **Chapter 18** ended with smoke, silence, and blood.
- **Chapter 19** opens with hallelujahs.

The word Hallelujah appears in the Old Testament 24 times.

This is the only chapter in the New Testament where the word Hallelujah appears, and it appears 4 times in six verses.

The word comes from the Hebrew **hallel** (praise) and **Yah** (the shortened form of the divine name YHWH).

Hallelujah means: Praise the LORD.

It is a word that belongs only in one context the presence of God. And it is the first word out of heaven's mouth after the world-system has been judged.

- Four Hallelujahs.
- Four reasons to praise.

Four dimensions of God's character vindicated in the fall of Babylon and the dawn of the Kingdom.

CONTEXT: Where are we in the book?

Chapter 17 gave us the identity of Babylon: the great world-system of false religion, corrupt commerce, and anti-God civilisation riding the beast.

Chapter 18 gave us the execution: the fall of Babylon announced prophetically, mourned by those who profited from her, and sealed by the millstone of divine judgment.

Now **Chapter 19** gives us the response of heaven. The response is not sorrow, not analysis, not a careful theological reflection, but worship. Loud, corporate, uninhibited, and unanimous worship.

There is a deliberate and stunning contrast between the two chapters.

***Chapter 18** is filled with the word 'alas' (ouai) — the cry of grief from those who loved the wrong city.*

***Chapter 19** opens with the word 'Hallelujah' — the cry of joy from those who love the right King.*

The same event produces opposite responses depending entirely on where your heart is.

When Babylon falls, you will either weep or worship. There is no third option.

Chapter	Perspective
Chapter 17	The theological explanation: Who Babylon is and why she falls
Chapter 18	The earthly response: The mourning of kings, merchants, and sailors
Chapter 19:1–6	The heavenly response: The worship of the redeemed multitude
Chapter 19:7–10	The announcement of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Chapter 19:11–21	The return of Christ: The Rider on the white horse

I. The first Hallelujah!

Revelation 19:1–2, *"After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honour and power belong to the Lord our God! ²For 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."*

'After these things' — The transition of the ages.

The phrase 'after these things' is one of John's key transitional markers in Revelation.

It signals a new scene, a new phase, a new chapter in the unfolding drama of history.

After the fall of Babylon, after the smoke rises, after the millstone sinks, after the silence falls, heaven opens its mouth.

The first word is Hallelujah.

Immediately we should notice something.

This is the only occurrence of the Hebrew word Hallelujah in the entire New Testament. *John, writing in **Greek**, suddenly breaks into **Hebrew**.*

Why?

*The use of the Hebrew Hallelujah is not accidental. It is John connecting this moment to the great Hallel tradition of Israel — specifically **Psalms 113–118**, the Egyptian Hallel, which were sung at Passover.*

*These were the psalms Jesus, and the disciples sang on the night of His betrayal (**Matthew 26:30**).*

They are songs of deliverance, of God's victory over the enemies of His people.

*By using the Hebrew word, John is saying: **this is the final Passover**. This is the ultimate Exodus. This is what all the Hallel psalms were pointing toward.*

'A great multitude' — Who is singing?

The singers are described as '*a great multitude in heaven.*'

This is the same language used in **Revelation 7:9** for the innumerable company of the redeemed. '*A great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne.*'

This is the complete company of the redeemed gathered in the presence of God.

Their voice is 'loud' means great, vast, overwhelming.

This is not a whispered anthem. It is the sound of every redeemed soul since Abel singing in unison.

The contrast with the mourning of Chapter 18 could not be more complete: the merchants wept softly at a distance. The redeemed shout from the throne room.

Four Attributes belonging to God.

The content of the first Hallelujah is a fourfold doxology:

- ✓ Salvation,
- ✓ Glory,
- ✓ Honour, and
- ✓ Power

All belong to the Lord our God. Each word is theologically loaded.

Attribute	What It Declares
Salvation (sōtēria)	Deliverance belongs to God alone — not to politics, not to economics, not to human empire. Babylon promised security and God delivers it.
Glory (doxa)	The splendour and weight of ultimate worth belong to God. Babylon glorified herself (18:7); God alone is worthy of glory.
Honour (timē)	The highest estimation belongs to God. The world-system demands honour for its structures and leaders; heaven redirects it entirely to its rightful Recipient.
Power (dynamis)	The effective, working strength that actually governs history belongs to God — not to the beast, not to the kings, not to the merchants. It always did.

Attribute	What It Declares
	<i>Notice that the redeemed do not claim these things for themselves. They do not say 'We have been saved, we have been glorified, we have been honoured.'</i> <i>They say: these things belong to God.</i> <i>The instinct of redeemed worship is always doxological — outward, God-directed, ascriptive. The redeemed have learned in full what they knew only partially on earth: it was never about them. It was always about Him.</i>

'True and righteous are His judgments'

The first Hallelujah immediately grounds itself in the reason for praise.

V 2, 'For true and righteous are His judgments.'

They are not praising God in spite of His judgment, but they are praising Him because of it.

'True' — His judgments correspond to reality.

They are not based on partial information, political calculation, or the pressure of the moment. They are based on the complete truth about what Babylon actually was and did.

'Righteous' — His judgments conform to perfect moral standards.

There is no excess, no cruelty for its own sake, no disproportionate punishment. God judged Babylon exactly as she deserved. Not more. Not less.

Two charges against Babylon.

The worship specifies why Babylon deserved judgment. Two charges are laid.

V 2, *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."*

Charge	Explanation
She corrupted the earth with her fornication	The Greek word for 'corrupted' means to destroy, to ruin, to bring to complete moral decay. Babylon did not merely sin — she infected the earth with her sin, spreading spiritual corruption to every nation through the wine of her fornication (Revelation 18:3).
She shed the blood of His servants	The blood of the prophets, saints, and all who were slain (Revelation 18:24) is the specific charge. God is the avenger of the innocent (Deuteronomy 32:43). The blood that cried out from the ground since Abel has received its final answer.

Deuteronomy 32:43, *"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people."*

Moses sang this in the desert, pointing forward. The multitude of heaven sings it in the presence of God, looking back.

- ✓ The same God.
- ✓ The same promise.
- ✓ The same faithfulness.
- ✓ What God said He would do, He has done.

Application: God's judgments are trustworthy, even when we cannot see the outcome.

The redeemed praise God for His judgments after they have seen the outcome. But the challenge for the church on earth is to trust those judgments before the outcome is visible to praise the same God for the same righteousness in the middle of the story that heaven praises Him for at the end.

Romans 12:19, *"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."*

We are called to entrust justice to God not because justice does not matter, but because it matters so much that only He can do it perfectly.

The martyrs under the altar cried 'How long?' (**Revelation 6:10**). The answer is **Revelation 19:2**: He has avenged you.

- ✓ His timing was right.
- ✓ His judgment was exact.
- ✓ His faithfulness was total.

II. The second Hallelujah!

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

The shortest Hallelujah — The most sobering.

The second Hallelujah is the briefest in the passage. A single sentence. But it is also the most theologically sobering.

The reason for this second burst of praise is not Babylon's fall, but its permanence.

'Her smoke rises up forever and ever.'

The phrase 'forever and ever' is the strongest expression of eternity in the Greek language.

It is the same phrase used for God's own eternal existence (**Revelation 4:9; 10:6**).

Here it is applied to the smoke of Babylon's judgment. This is irreversible, permanent, unending judgment.

This verse answers one of the deepest anxieties of the people of God through every age:

What if it comes back? What if a new Babylon rises? What if the beast recovers and the harlot is rebuilt?

The second Hallelujah is heaven's answer: No. Her smoke rises forever.

There is no recovery. There is no resurrection of the world-system. What God has judged stays judged. This is not a temporary setback for evil — it is its permanent end.

The Background: Isaiah and Edom.

The imagery of smoke rising 'forever and ever' is drawn directly from Isaiah, where God pronounces judgment on Edom the perpetual enemy of Israel, the nation that rejoiced when Jerusalem fell and aided the Babylonians against God's people:

Isaiah 34:9–10, *"Its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever."*

- What Isaiah declared over Edom as a type,
- John declares over final Babylon as the antitype.

The pattern of Scripture is consistent:

God's judgment on the enemies of His people is complete, irrevocable, and eternal. Every historical judgment of a world empire is a foretaste.

Revelation 19:3 is the final taste and there is no bitterness left to come.

Why Heaven praises the permanence of Judgment?

It might seem troubling that heaven would praise the permanent destruction of Babylon. But we must understand what Babylon represents.

She is not merely a city or an empire.

She is the comprehensive, organised, multi-generational system of human rebellion against God, the framework through which Satan has oppressed, deceived, and destroyed human beings made in the image of God.

When heaven praises the permanence of Babylon's smoke, it is praising the permanent end of every lie that kept souls from God.

- Every idol that robbed God of worship due to Him.
- Every drop of martyr's blood spilled in the name of a human empire.
- Every child exploited in the name of commerce.
- Every generation deceived by the ***pharmakeia*** of the world-system.

Heaven does not rejoice because suffering is beautiful. Heaven rejoices because suffering is over — permanently over.

The smoke that rises forever is not a reminder of cruelty, but it is proof that the cruelty is finished.

The same fire that destroys Babylon protects the new creation from its return.

The eternal smoke is the eternal guarantee and it will never come back.

Application: Fix your hope on the Kingdom that cannot be destroyed.

If Babylon's smoke rises forever, then the Kingdom of God, which Babylon spent millennia trying to destroy stands forever.

The Christian does not need to fear that the world-system will ultimately win. It will not. It has already been sentenced, and the sentence is being executed.

Daniel 2:44, *"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."*

III. The third Hallelujah!

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 Elders and living creatures — The oldest worshippers.

The **24 elders and four living creatures** have appeared throughout Revelation at every great moment of heavenly worship (**4:4–11; 5:8–14; 7:11–12; 11:16–18**). They are the representative worshippers of the heavenly court.

The elders most likely representing the complete people of God (**12 patriarchs of Israel + 12 apostles of the church**), and the four living creatures (lion, ox, man, eagle) representing the fullness of creation in its worship.

That they join the great multitude in this Hallelujah is significant.

The worship of **Revelation 19:1–4** is not a divided choir. The entire heavenly host, human redeemed, angelic representatives, the fullness of creation, and all sings in unison. This is the most universal act of worship in Scripture outside the eternal state itself.

'Fell down and worshipped'

The Posture of Heaven

The physical posture matters. They 'fell down and worshipped.' This is prostration, the complete casting down of the self before the majesty of God. It is the posture of those who have seen clearly who God is and who they are by comparison.

We live in an age that has largely abandoned the physical dimension of worship. We stand, we sit, we raise hands, but prostration has almost disappeared from Christian practice.

Yet every great encounter with God in Scripture produces prostration:

- Isaiah in the temple (**Isaiah 6:5**),
- Ezekiel before the glory-cloud (**Ezekiel 1:28**),
- John himself before the glorified Christ (**Revelation 1:17**).

Heaven worships on its face.

The elders and living creatures do not analyse the Hallelujah, but they join it. There is a kind of theological temperament that always stands slightly apart from corporate worship, evaluating it, critiquing it, making sure it is doctrinally correct before committing to it.

The heavenly elders, who have more theological knowledge than any of us have no such hesitation.

They fall down.

They worship.

Theology that does not produce prostration before God has not yet reached its destination.

'Amen! Alleluia!'

The Seal and the Song

Their contribution to the worship is two words: *'Amen! Alleluia!'*

The Amen (from the Hebrew 'āmēn, meaning 'it is true, it is certain, so be it') is placed before the Hallelujah which is an unusual order.

Normally 'Amen' comes at the end of a prayer or declaration as a seal of agreement.

Here, placed first, the Amen functions as the elders' affirmation of everything the great multitude has just sung. It is as if they are saying: What you have said is true. Every word of it. We who have been in the presence of God through the ages confirm it.

And then: Hallelujah, Praise the LORD. The confirmation becomes adoration. The theology becomes doxology.

Word	Function
Amen	Affirmation, the intellectual assent to the truth of God's judgment. 'What you have declared is accurate, certain, and true.'
Alleluia	Adoration, the emotional and volitional response to that truth. <i>'And therefore we praise the One who is worthy of it.'</i>

IV. The voice from the 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!'"*

The Voice from the Throne — A unique summons.

After the great multitude sings and the elders confirm, a voice comes from the throne itself not the One sitting on the throne (God does not command His own praise in this way), but from the throne's immediate vicinity.

This is likely an angelic voice, possibly one of the living creatures, who are positioned *'in the midst of the throne and around the throne'* (**Revelation 4:6**).

The command is sweeping: *'Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!'*

This is the most inclusive call to worship in the New Testament.

No one is exempted. No one is too junior, too recent in faith, too broken in experience, or too great in status.

'Both small and great' — The levelling of Worship.

The final phrase 'both small and great' demolishes every human hierarchy in the presence of God.

In the world-system, the great stand apart from the small. The powerful have access that the powerless do not. Status is currency, and it determines who gets to stand where.

In the presence of God, the voice from the throne calls them in together.

- The greatest apostle and the newest convert.
- The celebrated preacher and the anonymous Sunday school teacher.
- The martyr whose name fills church history and the believer whose name no one on earth remembers.
- Both small and great.

They stand together before the same throne, summoned by the same voice, to praise the same God.

The church on earth is a preview of this levelling. When we gather to worship, we do not sort ourselves by achievement, status, or spiritual seniority.

We are all servants.

We all fear Him.

We are all called to praise.

The equality of the worshipping community is not a social programme — it is an eschatological reality being lived out now, in advance of its final fulfilment.

'Those who fear Him' — The Heart of True Worship.

The servants are described as 'those who fear Him.'

The fear of God is the defining characteristic of the true worshipper throughout Scripture.

Psalms 111:10, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever."*

Proverbs 1:7, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Ecclesiastes 12:13, *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.*

It is not the servile terror of a slave before a tyrant.

It is the reverential awe of a creature who has grasped, however incompletely, the immensity and holiness of the Creator.

The fear of God is, paradoxically, the foundation of freedom. Those who fear God fear nothing else with ultimate seriousness.

The kings of **Revelation 18** feared **Babylon** and were devastated when she fell.

Those who fear God have a fear that endures when everything else is shaken.

Application: Worship is NOT a specialist activity — It is the calling of every believer.

The voice from the throne does not summon the professional worshippers, the gifted musicians, or the theologically trained. It summons all His servants, all who fear Him, both small and great.

Worship in **Revelation 19** is the activity of the whole people of God.

To excuse oneself from worship on the grounds of being 'not musical' or 'not very spiritual' is to misunderstand what worship actually is.

Worship is not a performance — it is a posture. It is the posture of the creature before the Creator, the redeemed before the Redeemer, the servant before the Lord. Every believer is equipped for it. Every believer is summoned to it. The voice from the throne is calling you by name.

V. The fourth Hallelujah!

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!'"*

The most thunderous sound in Scripture

The fourth and final Hallelujah of this passage is described with three layers of sound metaphor, each more overwhelming than the last. John reaches for natural images of irresistible, overwhelming sound because there is no human frame of reference adequate for what he hears.

Sound Image	What It Conveys
The voice of a great multitude	Volume beyond counting, the combined voices of every redeemed soul is the baseline sound.
The sound of many waters	From Revelation 1:15 , the voice of the glorified Christ. It is the sound that fills all space, that cannot be ignored or escaped, that is both beautiful and overwhelming.
The sound of mighty thunderings	From the throne of God itself (Revelation 4:5; 8:5). This is the sound of divine power and authority — the acoustic expression of omnipotence.

John is telling us that the final Hallelujah transcends human acoustics.

It is not simply louder than anything we have heard; it is qualitatively different in kind.

It partakes of the sound of the glorified Christ and the sound of the throne of God.

This is what happens when the redeemed sing in the presence of the One for whom they were created: their worship becomes indistinguishable from the worship that has surrounded the throne from before time began.

'The Lord God Omnipotent Reigns'

After all the sound imagery, after three metaphors of overwhelming auditory power, the content of the fourth Hallelujah is remarkably concentrated.

Five words in the Greek (hoti ebasileusen Kyrios ho Theos ho pantokratōr). The Lord God, the Almighty, has begun to reign.

The verb 'reigns' (ebasileusen) is in the aorist tense, the tense of completed, definitive action. It is not 'He is beginning to reign' or 'He will reign.' It is the aorist of the divine kingship being fully and finally asserted.

God has taken up His reign.

The long contest between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world is over. God has won. God reigns.

'Omnipotent'

The word translated 'Omnipotent' is the Greek ***Pantokratōr*** pan (all) + kratōr (strength, power, authority).

It appears **9 times in the New Testament**, and **8 of those occurrences are in Revelation**.

It is the supreme title of divine sovereignty: the One who holds all power, all authority, all strength in His own hands.

This title stands in deliberate contrast to everything that has been described in the preceding chapters.

- Babylon called herself a queen (**18:7**).
- The beast was given authority over every tribe, tongue, and nation (**13:7**).
- The kings of the earth gathered for war against the Lamb (**16:14**).

And against all of it, the voice of the great multitude declares: the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.

Not Babylon. Not the beast. Not the kings. God.

◆ The Moment Handel's Messiah First Rose to Its Feet

On **March 23, 1743**, **George Frideric Handel's Messiah** was performed in London for the first time before **King George II**. When the choir reached the Hallelujah Chorus based directly on **Revelation 19:6 and 11:15** the King rose to his feet. According to tradition, the entire audience rose with him, beginning a practice that has continued for nearly three centuries.

Whether the King rose from reverence, surprise, or simply sore legs is debated by historians. But the effect was profound:

an entire hall, spontaneously, on its feet, as the words rang out: 'Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!

The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.'

Handel himself, when asked why the Hallelujah Chorus was so powerful, reportedly said: *'Whether I was in my body or out of my body as I wrote it I know not. God knows.'* He said he saw *'the great God Himself'* while composing it.

What moved a king to stand?

What reduced a composer to tears?

What has moved audiences to their feet for three hundred years?

It is not a clever musical arrangement. It is the content.

'The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.'

When that truth lands in the human heart it produces the same response it has always produced: you cannot stay seated. You rise. You worship. You cannot do anything else.

The significance of this moment in Revelation's narrative.

The declaration 'the Lord God Omnipotent reigns' comes at a precise narrative moment:

- Between the fall of Babylon (**chapters 17–18**) and
- The return of Christ (**19:11–21**).

It is the declaration of sovereignty in the gap the affirmation that what is about to happen (the return of the King, the Marriage Supper, the final judgment, the new creation) flows not from chance or necessity, but from the deliberate, sovereign, irresistible reign of the God who has always been Lord.

This is why this passage matters for the church on earth. We live in the same gap between the sentence passed on Babylon (which is certain) and the full execution of the new creation (which is coming).

In this in-between time, the church is called to do what the heavenly multitude does: declare, with full voice, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.

Application: The Sovereignty of God is the ground of all Worship and all perseverance.

The four Hallelujahs of **Revelation 19:1–6** are not four random outbursts of emotion.

They are four theological declarations, each grounded in a specific truth about God.

- ✓ The first praises His attributes.
- ✓ The second praises the permanence of His judgment.
- ✓ The third confirms the truth.
- ✓ The fourth declares His omnipotent reign.

Together, they form a systematic doxology, praise that is not merely felt but reasoned, not merely spontaneous but grounded.

The Christian who can say 'the Lord God Omnipotent reigns' from a place of genuine conviction is the Christian who can endure anything. Not because suffering does not hurt, but because no suffering is outside the reign of the One who is praised in **Revelation 19:6**.

- ✓ He reigns over Babylon.
- ✓ He reigns over the beast.
- ✓ He reigns over the valley of the shadow of death.
- ✓ He reigns over the day you least feel it.
- ✓ He reigns always.

Romans 8:38–39, *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

The four Hallelujah’s

It is worth pausing to study the structure of these four Hallelujahs more carefully. They do not simply repeat the same sentiment with growing volume. Each one adds a new dimension to the worship:

Hallelujah	Verse	The New Dimension
First	V 1–2	Praise grounded in God's attributes and His righteous judgment — the theological foundation of worship.

Hallelujah	Verse	The New Dimension
Second	V 3	Praise for the permanence of that judgment — worship that is not anxious about Babylon's return.
Third	V 4	Praise confirmed by the representative worshippers of heaven — corporate, unified, Amen-sealed.
Fourth	V 6	Praise for the omnipotent reign of God — the triumphant declaration of sovereign Lordship over all.

The four Hallelujahs move from specific to universal: from 'He has judged the great harlot' (specific act) to 'the Lord God Omnipotent reigns' (universal truth).

Heaven begins by praising what God has done and ends by praising who God is. This is the movement of all mature worship: from gratitude for specific acts of grace to adoration of the eternal character of God Himself. Specific mercies open the door; the Person of God is the room you enter.

Old Testament background: The Hallel songs/ Psalms.

The Hallelujah tradition in **Revelation 19** is rooted in the Hallel Psalms (**Psalms 113–118 and 146–150**), which were sung at the great Jewish festivals — Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles.

These psalms all begin or end with 'Praise the LORD' and form the backbone of Israelite corporate worship. Understanding them illuminates what John is hearing in heaven.

Psalm / Text	Connection to Revelation 19
Psalm 113:1 , <i>'Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD!'</i>	Directly echoed in V 5 : <i>'Praise our God, all you, His servants.'</i> The Hallel summons are the same.
Psalm 115:13 , <i>'He will bless those who fear the LORD, both small and great.'</i>	The phrase 'both small and great' in V 5 is a direct echo of this verse linking the heavenly call to the Psalm tradition.
Psalm 117:1 , <i>'Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!'</i>	The universality of the praise in V 1 ('great multitude') reflects the Hallel's reach beyond Israel to all nations.
Psalm 146:10 , <i>'The LORD shall reign forever — your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!'</i>	The declaration <i>'the Lord God Omnipotent reigns'</i> in V 6 is the fulfilment of this repeated Hallel affirmation.

*John is telling us that the worship of the redeemed in **Revelation 19** is the **fulfilment of three thousand years of Hallel singing**. Every Passover where Israel sang these psalms was a rehearsal. Every Pentecost gathering was a rehearsal. Every Tabernacles celebration was a rehearsal. The people of God have been learning this song for millennia. In Revelation 19, they are finally singing it in the presence of the One it was always about.*

Conclusion

Two Cities, Two Responses, One Final Hallelujah

We began this with the image of the Berlin Wall coming down. The sound of people who had waited too long for something they had begun to doubt would ever happen, and who could not contain themselves when it did.

Revelation 19:1–6 is the cosmic, eternal, definitive version of that moment. Babylon has fallen. The long night of the world-system is over. The blood of the saints has been avenged. The righteous judgment of God has been executed. And heaven cannot contain itself.

Four Hallelujahs rise from the throne room. Each one a declaration:

- ✓ God is attributed the glory He was always due.
- ✓ His judgment is confirmed as true and righteous.
- ✓ His people affirm it with Amen.

And over all of it, the final thunder: the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.

*The question **Chapter 18** asked was: **When Babylon burns, where will you be standing?***

*The question **Chapter 19** asks is: **When the Hallelujah comes, will you know the words?***

Will you have been practising this song your whole life — in the Monday morning fog, in the Friday night exhaustion, in the Sunday gathering, in the quiet of your bedroom?

The redeemed multitude of Revelation 19 is not sight-reading. They have been singing this for a lifetime. And in the presence of God, they simply sing it louder.

◆ The last letter of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

On **April 8, 1945** — one day before he was hanged by the **Gestapo at Flossenbürg concentration camp** — **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** led a Sunday worship service for fellow prisoners.

A British officer named **Payne Best**, who was present that day, later wrote about it: *'He spoke to us in a manner which reached the hearts of all, finding just the right words to express the spirit of our imprisonment and the thoughts and resolutions which it had brought. He had hardly finished his last prayer when the door opened and two evil-looking men in civilian clothes came in and said: "Prisoner Bonhoeffer. Get ready. Come with us."'*

Bonhoeffer turned to Best before leaving. His last recorded words were: *'This is the end — for me, the beginning of life.'*

He **was 39 years old**. The war in Europe ended less than a month later.

Bonhoeffer was hanged by a system that believed it was winning. He died with the confidence of a man who knew the outcome of history — who had read **Revelation 19** and believed it.

He knew that the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. He knew that the smoke of his oppressors would rise forever while he would rise to something else entirely.

This is what the four Hallelujahs of Revelation 19 are for. Not merely for the moment when we see the outcome — but for the years before it, when we are still in the cell, still in the valley, still waiting. The man who can say 'this is the end — for me, the beginning of life' has heard the Hallelujah before he has seen it. He knows it is coming. And he sings it now.

Personal Challenge — Three Questions

1. **Can you sing the song?** Not musically — theologically. Can you say with conviction: Salvation, glory, honour, and power belong to the Lord my God? His judgments are true and righteous? The Lord God Omnipotent reigns? If these truths are abstract to you, ask God today to make them real. The worship of Revelation 19 is the overflow of a heart that has been gripped by these realities.

2. **Are you practising the song?** The redeemed in Revelation 19 sing naturally and spontaneously because they have been worshipping all their lives. Is worship a discipline and delight in your daily life — not just Sunday morning, but in the ordinary moments? The Hallel Psalms were daily prayers for Israel. The Christian who cultivates daily worship is the Christian who will recognise the tune when heaven sings it.

3. **Are you singing it in the hard times?** Bonhoeffer sang it in the cell. The martyrs under the altar kept the song alive through their witness. The voice from the throne summons both the small and the great — including those in difficult circumstances. Whatever you are facing this week, you are not outside the reach of the Lord God Omnipotent. He reigns there too. Sing in that place.

The hallelujahs of **Revelation 19** are the first four notes of a song that will never end. In the eternal state, in the new creation, around the throne of God, the worship of the redeemed will continue without interruption and without cessation — gathering volume and depth and beauty with every passing age, as the people of God understand more and more of who He is and what He has done.

You are invited to start singing now.

Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.

The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Theological questions.

Question	Insights for Study
Why does the New Testament use the Hebrew word Hallelujah only here?	John's use of the Hebrew breaks the Greek prose deliberately to signal continuity with the Hebrew Hallel tradition. It is a declaration that this is the fulfilment of Israel's ancient worship. The church in Revelation 19 is singing the song Israel has rehearsed since Sinai.
Who are the twenty-four elders?	Most likely the representative company of the redeemed — 12 patriarchs of Israel plus 12 apostles of the church — constituting the whole people of God across both covenants. Their 'Amen' in V 4 carries the weight of the entire covenantal history of God's relationship with His people.
How does Revelation 19:1–6 relate to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (V 7–10)?	The four Hallelujahs are the prelude to the wedding announcement. Worship always precedes the great events of God's redemptive plan. The cloud of praise clears to reveal the bride. The pattern: Worship prepares for intimacy with God.

Question	Insights for Study
Does heaven's praise of God's judgment mean Christians should rejoice over the suffering of the wicked?	No. The praise is not for suffering itself but for justice executed, truth vindicated, and God's character displayed. Heaven rejoices as a righteous judge rejoices when justice is finally done — not in cruelty, but in the vindication of what is right. Proverbs 11:10, <i>'When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.'</i>