

Sunday, May 21, 2023 - "The Return - Week 4 - Heaven's Hallelujah" - Wayne Stapleton

Key Passages: Revelation 18, Revelation 19, 1 Corinthians 1:22-25, Hebrews 11:16, John 18:36

- Feel free to read the passage(s) out loud as a group
- Allow the group to share freely about what stood out to them from the passage or from Sunday's message

#### Main Ideas

- Hallelujah = Hebrew for praise the Lord...really Heaven saying "praise God"
- A day will come when earthy empire is replaced by God's kingdom...and Heaven will sing hallelujah
- How is empire abusing people made in the image of God?
- Where do I see pain around me?
- Why are certain people in my community being hurt?
- Allegiance to Heaven and earthly empire CAN'T coexist
- Revelation 18: A lament of the end of empire
  - Babylon = man's rule/power/central authority
  - It was an actual terror and a symbol (Babylon = Rome in Revelation)
  - God doesn't share glory with any other empire
- The challenge is to find out where "Babylon" is around us and in us
- We are called not to hitch ourselves to early empire but rather the power of the Lamb...the church has a leader to unite behind
- Revelation 19:11-16
  - Jesus Christ, the Messiah
  - No one really fights against Jesus
- Empire vs. **Lamb Power**
  - Whose blood is on Jesus robe...his own
  - Not power of over but humble submission
  - There is a difference between empire and God's kingdom
- 1 Corinthians 1:22-25
  - Christ crucified (Paul doesn't teach Christ resurrected)
  - Jesus is a leader of death and humility
  - Lamb power makes no sense...apart from the Spirit
- Hebrews 11:16 - we are all exiles on Earth when we decide to follow Christ
- John 18:36
- Revelation 19 - Heaven's hallelujah
  - Do we join in the hallelujah?
  - All desires fall to the desire of Heaven

Questions (Feel free to use all of these, some of these, or none of these)

1. What does it look like for you to have allegiance to Heaven over any earthly "empire"?
2. Where do you see "Babylon" around you?
3. Where do you notice "Babylon" in you?
4. What does it look like for you to hitch yourself to the power of the lamb over empires here on earth?
5. How have you experienced "lamb power" instead of empire?
6. What does it mean for you that you are an exile here on Earth?
7. What is God inviting you into as a result of this message or passage?

#### Songs from the weekend:

[Joy of the Lord - *Grace Worship*] - [Psalm 46 (Lord of Hosts) - *Shane and Shane*] - [Showing Me Mercy - *Norflette Shumake*] - [Promises - *Maverick City*]