

## SONG OF GOD'S VICTORY

Winning or losing? Winners or losers? So much of life seems to be occupied by questions about who wins or who loses? So many times we seem to think that life is like a pie. If someone gets a piece of the pie, then there will be less for me: he wins and I lose. In cases of interpersonal relationships, what actually happens is that usually everybody wins or everybody loses. In the short term, some may think that they win at the expense of someone else but eventually both will lose.

I heard a story about a couple of GIs that were in Korea after the end of the war. They lived in a rented house and had a Korean house boy they paid a meager salary. They also were constantly doing things to him that made his life miserable. In their minds, they were winning at his expense. The house boy never complained and eventually their consciences got to them. They met with the house boy and told him that they felt bad about playing tricks on him and that they were going to stop. He told them that he was glad and that he would no longer use their toothbrushes to clean the commode. They just thought that they were winning!

Nevertheless, there is a place in life where winning is all important and that is the area of good and evil. In the ultimate outcome the two cannot coexist. One must triumph over the other. In our everyday lives we find ourselves in a struggle of these two polar positions. As Christians, we are to be growing in such a way that we gain victory over evil influence in our lives in an ever increasing manner. The ultimate victory will be celebrated before the throne of God. John saw a vision of this celebration that he recorded in the Revelation.

### REVELATION 15:1-4

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, *which are* the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. <sup>2</sup> And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. <sup>3</sup> And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!" <sup>4</sup> "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED." Revelation 15:1-4 (NASB95)

Just before John saw the saints of God standing beside the glass like sea, he saw seven angel with the seven last plagues which represented the wrath of God that was to be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth. This is significant because when the wrath of God come to the earth the saints of God - those that have obtained the victory will not be on the earth to experience that terrible time. The glassy sea that appeared to be mixed with fire may have been the heavenly equivalent of the water basin that was in the Jewish temple. The appearance of fire may have been the reflection of the sacrificial fires on the altar.

The important thing is that the saints of God are there in the presence of God and are engaged in praising Him. The significant thing about these people is that that had been victorious over evil and the evil one. The symbolism of John's vision pictures Satan as a beast that comes to prominent power before the end of time. The extent of his power in the earth was shown in that people were required to worship the image of the beast and had to receive his mark before they could buy

or sell. In our world today, it is not likely that we will be required to literally bow down to the image of the beast; however, we may find ourselves being required to show reverence and actually having fear of some great world leader. We may be required to undergo some sort of identification system that this leader institutes that, in effect, causes us to acknowledge that he is the salvation of the world with all its problems. I can image people following after some great leader and giving him the honors that only God deserves.

Those who are around the throne of God are rightly praising God and acknowledging His might and power. These saints are likely to have been the ones killed on earth because they did not show reverence nor worship the beast. Having now stood before the King of kings, the Lord God Almighty, they asked the question, "Who would not worship God and glorify Him?" They realize that everyone eventually will bow before God and acknowledge Him for Who He is.

The scene now changes, the seven angels have poured out their seven plaques and the beast has been defeated. John now sees a different group around the throne of God praising Him.

#### **REVELATION 19:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" <sup>5</sup> And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." <sup>6</sup> Then I heard *something* like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Revelation 19:4-6 (NASB95)

The 24 elders are thought to be representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles. They then would represent the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The four living creatures are thought to be representatives of all of creation. All of the created world and the religious world are in concert praising the Creator. Their worship of Him shows them bowing down in humility and giving agreement to the word of God. Worship is acknowledging the greatness of God. He is far greater than we are and we can show our realization of that fact by the way we conduct ourselves. The most evident way is by obedience to His commands. Such obedience is always preceded by agreement with God's word. The word AMEN is a word that shows agreement. The other way this group worshipped God was by the praise that they spoke about God. Do we brag on God as we have a chance to talk with others?

We find also in this vision of John that God expects us to praise Him. The voice that came from the throne commanded that all of God's servants praise Him. This praise should be the highest expression of our lives and it should be something that strengthens us as we acknowledge the source of our strength. That Source is none other than the Lord God omnipotent. It was this power that enabled those in the earlier scene to overcome the beast and gain the victory over evil.

#### **REVELATION 19:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Revelation 19:7-8 (NASB95)

The ultimate union of two people in the earthly realm is captured in the

marriage of a man and a woman. One day we will experience the ultimate union of ourselves with God and this is pictured in the Marriage of Lamb to His bride, the Church. Marriage is a happy and joy-filled occasion for those that are involved and so it will be in the heavenly marriage. The bride is pictured as clothed in fine linen, clean and white. This, of course, speaks of the purity of the person who has put evil out of his or her life and has agreed with God regarding righteousness. This will be the ultimate victory and it is reserved for those that have accepted Jesus as Lord of their lives and have received His righteousness and His life in place of theirs.

We can celebrate the victory that we now have as we come together in worship with the saints of God. Knowing that worship will be an important part of what heaven is all about, we should enjoy worship more than anything else we do, it should be our highest joy and should reflect the victory that we know we have in Christ.