

Rev 26-06-07a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday Morning Services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. It is the 7th of June, 2026. We are in the book of Revelation.

We are in chapter 19. We have trudged through the seals and trumpets, the intermediate visions and retrospective metaphorical reviews of both history and the current day in John's time, and that which extends forward all the way through to the final seven years of the age of Israel. We have seen the bowl judgments, we've seen the destruction of the scarlet harlot, the mystery that is Babylon riding the beast, the proclamation that the end of all of these presences has come, and in chapter 19 we see the victorious and glorious return of the Lord Jesus.

Wonderful, encouraging, uplifting subject. I am very happy to have arrived at this point. We have much to cover this morning.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of study and fellowship will begin. Father, what a privilege to be accorded entrance into the throne room to see the plans and purposes that unfold in human history revealed to us in your Word and by your Spirit. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ, who by achieving and guaranteeing our deliverance and our salvation, has accorded to us these wonderful opportunities.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your Word together, that God the Holy Spirit will help us to understand it and to see its pertinence in our lives so that we can be good stewards of the time and resources that have been granted to us. We pray that our lives will reflect your glory and will bring credit and glory to the Lord Jesus our Savior. We ask it in His name.

Amen. This chapter 19 is a wonderful bookend, if you will, to the earlier portion of the book, the introductory portion of the book, as it transitioned in chapter 6 into the judgments phase, beginning with the seals. And you can see this transition occur.

We have covered the first six or seven verses. I just want to review them to give us a runway from which we can take off. After these things, John says, I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, Alleluia, salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God.

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. The primary significance of this to me, this is my understanding, my take on this scene, is this unnumbered multitude in heaven spans generations, spans decades and centuries of the history of the church age at a minimum. It is at least those who were raptured at the beginning of chapter 4 in the Revelation.

You know the passages elsewhere in the New Testament that talk about the Lord Jesus coming

for us. We meet Him in the air. We are taken to be with Him.

And we have a heavenly perspective on the unfolding events of the first half and then the last half of this 70th week, the time of Jacob's trouble. It's not the time of the church's trouble, not the time of all of the saints' trouble. It is Jacob's trouble.

The 144,000 servants of God are assigned to tribes in Israel. This understanding of the unique destiny, plan, program, covenants, and promises that belong to Israel as compared to those distinct ones that belong to the church is important. The church is clearly manifest in chapters 2 and 3 and it is Israel with unnumbered saints in glory that we begin to see in chapters 4 and 5 and that we continue to see as a heavenly throng throughout the subsequent chapters until we arrive at 19, where this white-robed, joyous throng occurs yet again.

We have not seen an indication that this throng has been joined by the tribulational martyrs whose souls under the altar cry out for vindication and justice. They are given robes and told to wait. They are not taken to heaven.

They're not pictured before the throne. This white-robed throng is repeatedly described as a composite of every tribe and people and tongue and nation. This is a Gentile throng, a throng composed of the nations.

The word for Gentiles in the New Testament is the word that means the nations, the ethnoi, the various ethnicities. In contradistinction to Israel, this distinction becomes important to understanding chapter 19, who is where, who is doing what, who is called by what name, and so on. So just for clarification, you and I are church-age believers.

We are Gentiles. If we check out and leave this life before the chronological return of the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavens to issue the shout, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God so that the dead in Christ, not the dead in faith, not the saints of all ages, the dead in Christ rise. And Paul is quite accurate and careful in his description of who rises.

Moses is not going to rise. Elijah is not going to rise. These individuals from the Old Testament day await their resurrection because their age is not yet finished.

It won't be finished until the point we have reached in Revelation chapter 19. So the dead in Christ rise, join Christ in the air. John 14, I go to prepare a place for you.

If I go, I will come again, receive you to myself that where you, my disciples, soon to be apostles, soon to be joined by converts to the good news of Jesus Christ from Pentecost forward, have a place that is prepared for you, I will come and receive you to myself so that where I am, you all, beginning with the apostles, addressed as the leaders and the originators, if you will, in the sense of preaching the gospel of the church, the church, not Israel. They may have started out in Israel. If they had died prior to the crucifixion, prior to the resurrection, prior to Pentecost, they would

have been included as Old Testament saints.

The Lord Jesus' father on earth, Joseph, evidently had passed away. He's an Old Testament saint. His mother, Mary, is still there after Pentecost along with Jesus' believing brethren from his family.

They are New Testament. It's an interesting familial situation because Mary and the brethren who were converted and became believers and are mentioned in the book of Acts are going to arise at the rapture and join the Lord Jesus in the air, but not Joseph. Joseph will be an Old Testament saint, and his resurrection comes seven years later.

Keep this distinction in mind. We have to know who we are, why we're here, and understand the plan. Anytime you go to a meaningful service or observance, there is usually a program.

You open up the program, and in it is a sequence of events. This is who is going to offer an opening prayer. This is who is going to sing special music.

This is who is going to offer a scripture reading. Here's someone who might give a report. If you're in church, and this is the bulletin, I can't tell you how many bulletins I prepared and sent to the printers and got back with all of the content on the two inner pages and on the back prepared by me.

This is what happens in a small church. You don't have minions who can do that kind of thing, but there's a program. If you attend a wedding or a funeral or some other observance, there is almost always a program, and you can look down, and if you were distracted, or you were praying, or you were sneezing, and someone announces the hymn, and you didn't hear it, you look in the bulletin.

Oh, it's hymn number 465, grace greater than all our sin, or holy, holy, holy, or whatever it might be. It is helpful to know your part, to know when to stand up or when to sit down, when to get your Bible out. Put the hymnal away and get your Bible out, the notebook if you carry one.

You need the program. This is the program. Read the program, understand the program, and know our part.

It's that much more significant if you're not just in the audience and sitting in a pew, but you are one of the participants. Heaven help you if you're the best man or the maid of honor, and you go sit in a chair or a pew, and they're looking around for an engaged participant who has a role to play and needs to know where to be and what to do, and they're completely uninformed. How would you like to be the bride or the groom and be wandering around somewhere else in the church bumping into things, and everybody is out there waiting, and you don't know where you're supposed to be and what you're supposed to do.

You don't know the words to say. You don't know that there's going to be a unity candle or a

bucket of sand, or you're going to kneel and do something or other. Those of you that have been to multiple weddings and multiple types of weddings know that these things can be quite creative, or they can be just woodenly traditional.

Personally, I think a woodenly traditional wedding is great, but whatever it entails, we have to know our part. Here is where you and I need to know our part, so it's important to understand who's who, who's where, who does what, when, why, and how. So, after these things, voice in heaven, salvation, glory, and honor, and power belong to the Lord, our God.

The first one of these is salvation. It's easy to gloss over these doxologies, but look at each of these elements. They're not just picked out of a grab bag.

There's the voice of a great multitude in heaven. The Lord Jesus has not yet returned on his white horse. Old Testament saints have not yet arisen.

So, who is this great throng, this great multitude? Hallelujah. Salvation is the first thing mentioned. So, you could imagine that angels as observers are celebrating the salvation of human beings, but the emphasis, the people in the front of the view here, who are prominently a part of this group, are going to be church-age believers who are celebrating the salvation that comes through a personal, visible, known Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those in the Old Testament age, all these died in faith, not having received the promise. They didn't go up to heaven and receive it. They died not having received it.

They receive it when they are raised, just as we do. So, salvation that belongs to the Lord our God is celebrated by those who have been raptured and taken to glory, taken to heaven, are the first to arrive. Salvation is foremost in their minds, foremost in our minds.

This will be us. If you want to know the words to the doxology, you can memorize them here. Salvation and glory and honor and power.

If you like acronyms to remember things, then it's going to be S-G-H-P. Salvation, glory, honor, and power. Each of those has significance.

It isn't just something to throw out. Think about salvation originating, engineered, accomplished by the Lord our God. Glory, the praiseworthy nature of God.

God is all-powerful and you can't even say heaven help us if he were cantankerous or unpredictable or changed his mind. Yeah, I know I started out with that plan of salvation, but looking at you all this throng in heaven, I just don't think I can tolerate your presence. Whiskey away and you don't go into the eternal future.

It is such a blessing that God is God and we thank him for his glory, that he is who he is and he is worthy to be praised, worthy to be served, worthy to be appreciated and to be celebrated.

Salvation and glory and honor. God honors his promises.

He imbues us with honorable character, with integrity, with strength to overcome our weaknesses, to be those who can be counted on, who can be trusted, who can be given a responsibility or a task and fulfill it, who take charge of whatever is involved in stewardship, whatever is allocated to us, whatever is under our purview, our control. We are faithful. We are good and faithful servants.

That honor comes to us and is given to us because God himself is honorable. There are mottos, West Point, duty, honor, country, and you think about what is involved and those cadets get very steeped in the meaning of that ethos and rightfully so. Salvation, glory, honor, and power.

It's one thing to have good intentions, to have best wishes, but what if you don't have the power to bring them about? What if you are thwarted? Many people who are employed have a great idea. They can see a problem. They know exactly how to fix it, but because of the way the organization is structured, because they have an uninterested or distracted or rascally boss, what should be done, what ought to be done, what would benefit everyone doesn't get done.

You can see what needs to be done. You can easily do what needs to be done, but you do not have the power. I am so grateful that God has not just power, but ultimate power, because Satan and those aligned with Satan have a different agenda, a different purpose, a different desire for outcome, and if God did not have the power to thwart him, to judge him, and to ultimately banish him from our future existence, eternity would be a troubled place, but God has power.

You can spend 15 minutes thinking of examples and sending up thanksgiving and acclamation, appreciation, and praise to God. That is what constitutes worship. Respect for God, grasping just how wonderful He really is.

Think about these four things, salvation, all that that entails, delivery from our nature, from our environment, from those around us with fallen natures, from the aggregation of our fallen natures. We're like fissionable nuclear material. The more of it you pack into a small space, the more it's likely to go nuclear.

Salvation gives us hope, gives us the opportunity and the ability to love in a genuine, abiding, and meaningful fashion. Glory, the magnificence of God's plan and purpose stretching into the eternal past, creation, the unfolding, and God's intervention in human history. Honor, the character of God, the beauty of God's holiness and His love and interest in us.

What is man that you're mindful of him, or the son of man, that you visit him, that God intervenes, God does something about our awful situation without him. And power, not just good intentions, not well wishes, not an ongoing eternal struggle between yin and yang and right and wrong and light and darkness. God has power.

So thankful for all of those things. And they belong to our God. Notice there is a possessive.

It's not to an abstract God, a distant God. He is our God. And true and righteous are His judgments.

He's not just an entity. He isn't just a an embodiment of certain characteristics. He is active.

He perpetrates judgments. He looks at things, finds out whether they are right or wrong, righteous or evil, good or bad, helpful or destructive. And He intervenes.

He judges. He resists the proud. He gives grace to the humble, in a nutshell.

And in this case, the particular expression of that justice is the judgment of the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication. Emphasizing the composition of this celebratory throng is a reminder that the harlot isn't something that arises within the last seven years and then is destroyed. And all of the saints of over 2,000 years of church history are celebrating the fact that some gal that was doing bad things over a of years has been judged by God.

Everyone in heaven has seen and experienced the oppression and the perpetration of evil, the sponsoring of evil, the fornications of this spiritual entity, this enterprise that is pushed and powered by Satan. Every one of these in the throng have seen it and felt it in some way. And every single one has a personal reason to celebrate God's judgment on this great harlot.

Do you see the imbalance if you've got millions of believers across tens of centuries celebrating? It would be like everyone celebrating the overthrow of Hitler. Well, yeah, he's certainly a bad guy. But in my day, we had Nero.

In my day, we had somebody else. We had an oppressive individual with great power that slaughtered thousands, tens of thousands. That's who I'd really like to see judged.

You've got one little small exemplar. No, this is the judgment on every expression across the period of time that these individuals have observed. And every one of them has a personal reason to celebrate God's judgment on the harlot.

You can see murderers that have their victims and the families. You can sympathize, empathize with them seeing justice done to the perpetrator. But think about if you had a loved one who was murdered and you see that individual brought to justice, what is the difference in the level of gratitude and appreciation and celebration that judgment has been done? When it's personal, you've got an exponentially greater appreciation.

And I believe that's what's going on here. That's why, as we have seen, this harlot's not just an end times entity. She has been around since the beginning of time.

So this great harlot who has corrupted the earth with her fornication and he has avenged on her

the blood of his servants shed by her. These are all of the oppressed and martyred believers who have been faithful unto death because they were killed for their faith. You think about the Christians in the first and second century in Rome who were thrown to the lions and were mutilated and massacred and tortured and oppressed and persecuted and hounded in every year of every decade of every century just since the first century of this era.

How much celebration is there going to be when they see this Babylon? And this is a reminder also that in heaven, time is different. How is it that long dead tyrants and despots and oppressors can be judged in one hour? Well, it is a heavenly hour. It's not just an earthly manifestation of one implementation of Babylon in the 70th week.

When God does this judgment, this looks forward to the lake of fire. It looks forward to the great white throne. It incorporates it.

It is as good as done. But there is a timelessness that makes it difficult for us to wrap our mind around some of these events and some of these concepts because we want to think of everything like a bowling ball rolling down a hill and it's only in one place at one time and it moves forward and not backward and you can't see where it is until it gets there. In heaven, past things are present.

Future things are present. It is a higher dimension. This is why we have to be promoted and given a resurrection form, a resurrection body to participate.

But all of the implementations of Babylon going back to the dawn of history are judged. That's why her cup is so full of the blood of saints and prophets. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants that have been shed by her.

God has had servants through the stretch of time. Again, they said, hallelujah, her smoke rises up forever and ever. Remember that the scarlet harlot doesn't represent an individual but a strategy, an entity.

It is a metaphor for the capital city of Satan, his proxy means of perpetrating his power, his schemes, and so on. And it is destroyed in one hour. It is gone.

It is no more. Do you remember the description? Verse 21, mighty angel takes a great stone. In the last chapter, 21 of chapter 18, mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, threw it into the sea.

Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down and shall not be found anymore. Pay attention here, this is important for the interpretation of some related passages. The millstone is thrown into the sea and the declaration is made, the great city has been thrown down and shall not be found anymore.

Does the city exist or does it not exist? If it's thrown down and you can't find it anymore, does it

exist? No, it does not. It has been destroyed. Sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, trumpets shall not be heard in you anymore.

No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore. Sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. Light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore.

Voice of a bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. Your merchants were the great men of the earth. By your sorcery all nations were deceived.

In her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all those who were slain on the earth. Babylon is fallen, is fallen. Back in verse 10 of that chapter, in one hour your judgment has come.

You are no longer operational. Verse 17, in one hour your great riches came to nothing. They cry out, they throw dust on their heads.

In verse 19, the observers, alas, alas, the great city in which all who had ships on the sea became rich, in one hour she is made desolate. She is no more. You can review the other descriptions of her destruction.

The ten horns in verse 12 of chapter 17 receive authority. They have one mind. Verse 14, they make war with the Lamb and so on, but they are the ones who, in verse 17 of 17, God has put it in their hearts to fulfill His purpose to be of one mind and to give their kingdom to the beast until the word of God is fulfilled.

But in verse 16 above that, the ten horns which you saw on the beast will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. A person whose flesh is eaten and is then immolated or incinerated or cremated does not exist, has no corporeal form or function, and cannot be found. This is greatly celebrated by the throng in chapter 19, and it tells us in verse 3, hallelujah, her smoke.

This is the aftermath. This is the memory of what has happened. There was a great fire and conflagration.

There was a great destruction, and if you've ever burnt a brush pile or burnt anything that you had to watch over time, even a fire in your fireplace, after the wood or the brush or the trash or whatever else is in the pile has been incinerated and no longer has physical existence, the heat and the aftermath cause smoke to rise from the former location of that entity, and the smoke is a reminder, oh, there used to be something there. It's not there anymore. If it still existed, Babylon would be a flaming conflagration and ongoing fire forevermore.

The fire does its job and destroys the city, and now the smoke, meaning anytime you think about Babylon, you're going to think about the destruction. The smoke is the memory. Smoke can contain concepts of thought.

This is why incense that is burned represents prayers that go up before God. It is the smoke of the burning incense. They don't take the incense and throw it at the ceiling and try to get the incense sticks or the liquid or whatever it is they're burning to go to heaven.

They burn the incense, and it is the smoke that ascends and represents the prayers of the saints. Smoke can contain concepts. It doesn't contain the material reality of what generated it.

You don't pray and you go to heaven. Prayers go to heaven. The smoke of our burning ascends, and it is the concept of evil such as this deserved judgment.

God judged it. It has been destroyed. It is no more.

It's not coming back. Nobody's going to play a flute in that city. This is an important concept, and I think you know why.

Upcoming. So this is something to celebrate. This gets a separate hallelujah.

This judgment is permanent. There is no coming back from it. There's no second chance.

There's no repentance. There's no ongoing conflagration, and people are going to go and, well, let's go the edge of the New Jerusalem and look out on the horizon and see the burning of Babylon. The smoke represents the ongoing and permanent memory that that kind of thing that is opposed to God will be judged by God, and the judgment is permanent.

Verse 4. The 24 elders. Remember, the 24 elders appeared in the beginning of this book, and they represent leadership of the raptured church. They appear after Revelation 4.1. Come up here.

Look around in heaven. Here are the 24 elders. They are sitting on chairs or thrones.

They have crowns that they cast before God. But the number 24, this is the double portion. Israel represented by 12, but the elder shall serve the younger.

Joseph ends up having the double portion among the sons of Jacob that should have belonged to Reuben, and if not Reuben, then Simeon. If not Simeon, then Levi. If not Levi, then Judah.

But the blessings of the firstborn get redistributed. Judah gets the rulership. Joseph gets the double portion in the same way that Esau should have had the double portion, but Jacob got it.

So 24 elders clearly, and there's almost unanimous agreement by Bible interpreters that these individuals are representative of the church. 24 elders and the four living creatures fall down and worship God who sat on the throne saying, Amen, Hallelujah. Notice we have now had Hallelujah in verse one.

We have had Hallelujah in verse three. We have Hallelujah in verse four. Threefold Hallelujah.

Then a voice comes from the throne saying, Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, small and great. Verse six, I heard a great voice of a great multitude, sound of many waters, sound of mighty thundering saying, Hallelujah. That's a fourth Hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.

You had four characteristics in verse one, salvation, glory, honor, and power. You have four Hallelujahs that almost map onto those characteristics. Verse seven, let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory.

New concept here. Not previously mentioned or anticipated. This is a brand new thing that just sort of comes out as an aside.

Have you ever been talking to someone and you think you kind of know the landscape of the conversation and they're talking and you're listening and they just sort of offhand mention a thing and they're ready to go on and you say, wait a minute, you had surgery last month? I didn't know about this. What was this? Wait, stop. Stop the conversation.

You've mentioned that. What is this? This is a big deal and you just almost failed to mention it and I didn't know about it. That's the surprise that comes with the marriage of the Lamb has come.

Who knew the Lamb was going to get married? When John weeps because there's no one qualified to open the seven-sealed scroll and someone says the Lion of the tribe of Judah can open it and John turns, he gets a similar surprise. He's expecting to see the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Tribe of Judah, rulership.

What does he see? A Lamb and it looks like it was killed. And who presides, who initiates and presides over all of the judgments that follow? It is the Lamb. Here, the Lamb is still the representation of the Lord Jesus and the marriage is for the Lamb.

His unique of the many identities and Jesus uses a different one for each of the seven churches when He addresses them. The identity that is presented here is the Lamb. The Lamb, His marriage has come and His wife has made herself ready.

Notice she's not in the back making herself ready. She has made herself action and pastime with results that continue to the present and into the future. If we are going to be ready, we have to do that preparation now.

Make ourselves ready. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, present it to Himself as glorious. Praise the Lamb and give Him glory.

A glorious church, a church that appreciates and understands and is characterized by the glory of Jesus Christ. Do we think of ourselves as bearing the glory, as representing the glory, as

reflecting the glory? We should. The Lamb's wife has made herself ready.

Verse 8, to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen. Notice we don't earn or deserve anything. It is granted.

How many times have we seen during the judgments? It was granted to these individuals to hurt men for five months. It is granted to them to do this. It is granted.

This is something that is a part of the judgments of God for which we are grateful and that we celebrate. It was granted to her. We are allowed to bear the righteous deeds.

We wouldn't be able to do a righteous deed. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We fade as a leaf.

Our iniquities, like the wind, carry us away. But the righteousness that comes by faith in Jesus Christ, we are allowed to wear as a garment. And when I say we, the bride of the Lamb, how do we know that this is the church and not someone else? The marriage of the Lamb.

Wonderful concept. Plenty of opportunities to see it anticipated in Scripture. But we're going to pause here and take our break.

Think about the opportunity to make ourselves ready now to be a part of this entity that is represented as the wife of the Lamb. That in itself ought to motivate us to look at ourselves and think of ourselves. Are we qualified to celebrate the salvation and the glory and the honor and the power of the Lord? Are we prepared to participate and to do our part to reflect His glory by bearing and wearing this white linen wedding garment, which is the righteous deeds that we are enabled to do by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, to wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb so that corporately and together they form this beautiful garment for the bride of the Lamb.

Let's pause here and take a break. When we come back, we're going to see how we know who the Lamb's wife is in contradistinction to others that are mentioned in upcoming verses. But let's pause here and take our break.