

Rev 26-06-10a

Good evening, welcome to the Wednesday Night Bible Study here at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 10th of June, 2026. We're in Revelation chapter 19, looking at the end of the end times, if you will, the destruction of Babylon, the celebration in heaven, the announcement of the marriage of the Lamb, something not previously mentioned, the attendees, the participants, and the other pertinent details that really begin to be important for us to be aware of since we are now fully participating.

We have been represented in a couple of throng scenes earlier in heaven, but at this point we are now genuine participants in the direct festivities. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study, and we'll begin. Father, we're thankful that we have this opportunity to spend time together in encouragement, in the fellowship that unites believers who love you and love your word and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are grateful for him. We are grateful that he is at the center of our existence, our identity, our hopes, our purpose. The meaning and definition of our lives is entirely resident in him.

We thank you for his example of faithfulness as a human being, enabled by the Holy Spirit and guided by your word. We pray that as we look at your word tonight that the Holy Spirit will find us ready to receive it, to have it implanted deeply in the soil, and for it to grow and sprout and bring forth its fruit in our lives. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. What an exciting section here in chapter 19. It's been a bit of a slog.

It reminds me of the first 39 chapters of Isaiah, where there's a lot of sternum and drang and sort of depressing unfoldings of necessary but nevertheless terrible judgments. The judgment phase is largely complete. Not completely complete.

Largely complete. That may be a contradiction in terms. Largely complete.

It's either complete or it's not. Largely completed perhaps. But in chapter 19, John hears the voice.

We saw this last time. True and righteous are the judgments of the Lord Jesus and God in heaven. It's not a matter of importance which one is being referred to in chapter 1. Salvation, glory, honor, and power belong to the Lord our God.

Some texts don't have the Lord. If it's our God, it makes it more clear that it's the Father. I tend to think that the Lord in verse 1 is not original.

There are some clear additions in this chapter that I'll point out as we go. But in my Bible, if you want to follow my suggestion, verse 1 says, Salvation, glory, honor, and power belong to our God. True and righteous are his judgments.

He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication. This again makes it clear that it is God the Father. The Lord Jesus is an agent in the judgment that the Father pronounces from the throne room.

He has avenged on her the blood of his servants shed by her. Again, I think this is all the servants across time. Many of these statements are going to be comprehensive across history as we will see.

Again, they said, hallelujah, her smoke rises up forever and ever. It isn't that Babylon lives, abides, and experiences the torments of judgment forever and ever. The smoke from it arises forever and ever.

This is an important point for later. The 24 elders and the four living creatures fall down and worship God who sits on the throne saying, amen, hallelujah. I changed the tense there, but that's what's happening.

Then a voice came from the throne saying, praise our God, all you his servants and those who fear him, small and great. I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, sound of many waters, sound of mighty thundering saying, hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready.

To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the acts of the righteous saints. You can see here most clearly the origin of the Catholic doctrine that the saints are valuable to the church because their righteousness can be appropriated by other people. It's redistribution of wealth.

It's kind of a communist idea, a communist interpretation that certain saints were so righteous they've got an excess and God has a bucket of excess righteousness and he can use that to bless those who didn't generate any of their own. It's complete nonsense. The righteous acts of the saints belong to the saints who accomplish them by faith.

Righteousness is by faith and I can't pigtail or ride on the coattails. Pigtail wouldn't work. I can't pull the apron strings.

I can't be towed along by some other person and their faith. I live and die. I am rewarded or judged based on my faith and the righteousness that I lay claim to by faith.

All righteousness is sourced in the Lord Jesus and in him from God the Father. We gain our righteousness from the Father and the Son, not fellow saints. It is a completely bogus idea.

It promotes extensive amounts of distortion and subjectivity to think otherwise. The bride of Christ here, the wife of the Lamb, is clothed with the righteous deeds of the saints. That does not mean

that the whole church gets to parade around in the righteousness of individual people, Saint Anselm and these others, Saint Francis, name your saint, Saint Jude.

That's not what this means and I think that's pretty obvious. But the wife of the Lamb is the aggregation of saints and each of those who qualify in this particular way and I am not convinced that this is the entire church. I think this may be the overcomer church, the ones to whom it is granted to walk with Christ in white.

The wife of the Lamb is dressed in white. The wife of the Lamb would naturally walk with the Lamb and accompany him and sit with him on his throne and participate in other overcomer blessings. So it isn't clear to me that all church age believers are going to participate in this role which is highly metaphoric and symbolic but is nevertheless a real event, a real status and standing.

And you will see a parallel to this upcoming because to her it is granted then verse 9, blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Now there are a lot of Old Testament saints available to attend the wedding supper but you remember the parables of the Lord Jesus that there were those who were invited and said, I'm too busy, I need to go look at a cow. In a separate parable, the wise and foolish virgins and half of them did not get to go in and serve and enjoy the festivities because they weren't ready.

The bride has made herself ready and I think this is, and if I'm wrong, just take this with a grain of salt, it's not real clear. I personally believe that the wife of the Lamb is composed of overcomers from within the church. It is a subset of church age believers.

In the same way that those who are called to the wedding supper are blessed, that's not every Old Testament saint. That's those who were faithful and obedient, the ones that are in the roster of the faithful in Hebrews 11 and the thousands of other Old Testament saints that were of that type of faith. These are privileges that are granted to those who are faithful.

It is motivation. It's not payback, it's not earned or deserved, but it is recognition that those who love God enough to be faithful and obedient are allowed to enter into greater and grander things. Those who get saved, Old Testament and new, but just consider it kind of a minor thing, are going to be considered a minor thing in the eternal future.

God says, I honor those who honor me. Those who don't honor me are lightly esteemed. King Saul is going to be in glory, but he's not going to be participating in the rule of the Davidic kings.

He could have. There was a promise made, if you'll be faithful and obedient, I will make a dynasty out of you, Saul of Benjamin. But Saul wouldn't do it, couldn't do it.

He had too many personal objectives. And so he will be present at the resurrection of Old Testament saints, but he's not going to be in the realm of blessing and reward, despite the fact

that he was king of Israel, the first king of Israel. It doesn't matter.

Faithfulness and obedience is what counts. If you don't remember anything else from this night and Revelation 19 in general, notice that God blesses those who pay attention and who are prepared. The wife of the lamb has made herself ready.

Blessed are those who are called, who are invited to this marriage. There is a basis. There is a condition for being considered.

You can see many examples of this in human life. Not everybody gets to do everything because some people have their license suspended or have a conviction that makes it impossible for them to own a weapon or vote or other things like that. So those that can't vote are generally those that are convicted of being an illegal alien.

So blessed are those. These are the true sayings of God. I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, see that you do not do that.

I am your fellow servant and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. There is a parallel to this at the close of the book and in chapter 22, after being shown the river of life, the middle of the street, either side is the tree of life, no more curse.

They will see God's face, no night there, no need of the light of the sun. Verse six, then he said to me, these words are faithful and true. Sound familiar? We just have that stated in our passage.

The Lord God of the prophets sent his angel to show his servants the things which must shortly take place. Then there's a quote of the Lord Jesus. I'm coming quickly.

Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

Angel, the word Angelos, we've seen this many times. This is just review. Its meaning is determined by context.

If Rhoda hears a knock at the door and here's something muffled coming through about Peter, she thinks, well, that's got to be a messenger, an angel, Angelos from Peter. She runs back in and she said, Peter is at the door. And they say, no, it must be his angel.

It must be his messenger. He's coming in the name of Peter. Of course, they open the door and he's been let loose from prison.

It's a human messenger that is in view here. It is a bit confusing at our distance and with our English lack of appreciation for the kind of context that works better in Greek and in Hebrew and

in Aramaic. This is not an angel, a winged pre-existing civilization member represented by stars singing at creation and the rest of it.

This is a human being. In my Bible, I have a line out in angel and it is messenger. And this is clear from what this messenger says.

It is the same guy saying the same thing that he just said in our passage in chapter 19. I fell down to worship before the feet of the messenger who showed me these things. He said to me, see that you do not do that.

If you notice almost all of that is in italics, it basically says, see not. He says, look, don't. I am your fellow servant and of your brethren, the prophets.

We are not brethren to angels. Angels are never called brethren with human beings or vice versa. And those who keep the words of this book, and he says in our passage, I am of your fellow communicators, your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus.

Testimony of Jesus is uniquely possessed by those who are saved by the Lord Jesus. And that is human beings. Now there's been many speculations about some sort of angelic salvation.

Was there an opportunity before the lake of fire judgment was pronounced? It's all speculation. The word of God, as far as I can tell, has no information for us about that. What we do know is those who have the testimony of Jesus throughout the book of Revelation and in the writings of John earlier are always human.

Always. So this is a guide, a fellow human being. I am of your brethren, servants, prophets, those who have the testimony of Jesus.

So don't fall at my feet. An angel could easily say the same thing, but this is not an angel. So I'm of those who keep the words of this book.

Who are the words of this book written to to keep? Are angels supposed to study this and remain faithful and obedient? This is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Read the first three verses that God gave to the Lord Jesus, who through an angel gives it to John through a messenger. And it is sometimes not clear whether it is an angelic angel or a human angel, an angelic messenger or a human messenger.

If it was important for us to know, we would know. These two passages in 19 and in 22 tell us that it is important for John and for us to know that you do not make an issue out of the messenger, whether they are angelic, whether they are human. In the same way that if bad news comes, you shouldn't shoot the messenger.

If good news comes, you don't worship the messenger. And this has applications in the present day. There are people who make too much of a pastor or an author or a person of note in the

media who communicates about the word of God, interprets, teaches it, what have you.

If you get short-sighted and overly occupied with the messenger, these passages help us correct that wrongly placed priority, that wrongly directed attention. You look to and through the messenger to the one who originated the message, which is our Father in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit. And when I get a message on my phone or I talk to someone on the phone, I appreciate having a good phone.

It's got good volume controls. It has clear audio. It's got a great little speaker in it.

If I'm looking at a video on my phone that tells me how to rewire something, it's great if it has a good screen and it's clear and the controls to stop and start are available. A great phone facilitates communication and the receiving of information. And you can appreciate, wow, I've got a good phone.

We have all had pastors that we really appreciate, wonderful teachers just gifted by God to help make things clear. Great. Appreciate them and move on.

I don't just sit there staring. This is just such a good phone. I just can't get over it.

Let me sit here for the next half hour and marvel over the wonderful MOLED screen and the super high definition. We don't do that. So notice the parallel here, and I encourage you to put this reference 22, 8 through 10 or 11.

We'll talk about that when we get there with our passage in chapter 19 at verse 10. When you have something twice, it's really important. God only repeats himself because we're a little dense.

And on important points, he will reiterate it. He will underscore it to make it clear. This is an important point.

Don't forget it. So we've had two really good points so far in Revelation 19. If you step back and get the big picture, one is there is nothing more important than being prepared.

God uses prepared people. God incorporates prepared people into his plan and purpose. If we are distracted, if we are persuadable, if we are easily tempted into unproductive activities and areas, a helpful way to minimize that is not just to sit at the table.

There's an album cover by Don Henley where he's sitting at a kitchen table, and there's like an ashtray, and he's lighting these matches and blowing them out and lighting these matches and blowing them out. And it always reminds me of somebody who would sit there with a lighter and a pack of cigarettes saying, I'm not going to smoke. And all you're doing is sitting at the table, staring at the pack and endeavoring to resist picking one up and lighting it.

In the same way, it is not enough to say, I want to stop and turn away from something unhelpful,

something sinful, something evil, something certainly distracting that just sucks away time, if nothing else. It makes me a bad steward of time, opportunity, energy, resource. Turn away from one thing, you will be infinitely more successful if you also turn toward something else to fill that gap, to replace it, to supplant it, to eradicate its memory.

Something that is true and honest and noble, worthy. Think on these things, right? So be prepared and think of ways to make ourselves ready so that we can be in that portion of the church that participates as the wife of the lamb, the bride of Christ in the true sense, wearing our own righteous white robes. Not saying, I sure hope Anselm did enough good deeds to cover me up so I'm not ashamed.

I will do faithfulness and obedience so that I can be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, because I am rightly dividing the word of truth. I am prioritizing it, I'm remembering it, I'm praying it, I'm starting my day with it, just a few minutes. It is like uranium-235.

A little bit of it will power us for hours, days. Go in the strength of that meat 40 days and 40 nights, but it's like a lot of other things. You can have an energy drink or an energy bar, but if it's sitting in the package on the shelf or in the fridge, it's not actually imparting any energy.

Got to imbibe, got to partake, got to internalize, got to prioritize. This is our job. It's why we're here.

Who are we? Why are we here? We are here to represent the Lord Jesus and we are here to lay hold of righteousness by faith and get ready for future things. I heard, this is a quick aside, I heard an interesting argument against the existence of God from some guy that's well known for this sort of thing. He said, well, among all the other things, the suffering of animals.

I don't get the suffering of animals. What does that possibly contribute? What kind of God would let nature be red in tooth and claw and little baby rabbits are eaten by wolves and harmless little seals are eaten by killer whales? His example was a tree falls in the forest and traps a little deer with its leg broken underneath, and it can be there for days, suffering and agony. What kind of a God would arrange a creation that lets this random painful suffering take place? And you theists and you Christians need to give me an answer for that.

At the same time, on a completely different end of the spectrum, I am making myself more informed about the origin of the universe, the origin of life and the cosmological constants, the equations, the mathematics that are used by advanced people, Einstein and Hawking and Penrose and many others, Polkinghorne and to going back to Newton and the rest to explain the universe, to describe the universe. And ultimately you reach a certain point at which you have to start dealing with infinity. And when you start dealing with infinity, things get really weird.

Let's say there is an infinite distance between you and me. And so I travel 500,000 miles toward you. I'm still an infinite distance away.

You know, there was an ancient example of this where they're talking about Achilles walking across a stadium and the stadium is, let's say, 500 yards wide. So if Achilles is going to travel that distance, well, he first has to travel half the distance. He first has to travel a quarter or an eighth or a sixteenth and you start dividing.

And there are an infinite number of halves that he has to cover before he can get across the stadium. And math says he can never cross the stadium because there are an infinite number of divisible lengths that he has to cover first and nobody can cover infinity. And math just gets weird.

I say that to say this. Our Bible tells us that momentary light affliction works an eternal weight of glory. If you lived a hundred years and you had only had one painful experience, you broke your arm in the fourth grade.

Let's say that hurt for five weeks. Five weeks compared to a hundred years, which is 5,200 weeks. Five weeks over 5,000.

The pain diminishes to the point of negligent in consideration. It's just not worth bothering about compared to the vastness of no pain. Spitting in the ocean compared to the water in the ocean, the spit becomes insignificant.

And eternity, whenever you hear somebody talking about, well, how could a great God allow pain? God allows us to enter into eternity and pain over eternity reduces pain to nothing. And that's what Paul says. Our momentary light affliction.

And he's talking to people who are going to be fed to the lions. He says it's momentary and it's light compared to the eternal weight of glory. That's a math equation.

Paul, the apostle, the mathematician. Put your pain over infinite, eternal blessing. How big is it? I can't even measure it.

It's so small, right? So don't let somebody Buffalo you with how could a good God. This is the God of someone's imagination. The God of my imagination, the God that I define would never allow a little child to scrape their knee or burn their finger because pain, pain bad.

God says there's a lot of pain in the world and not all of it has a teaching purpose. It's not all there for some greater higher lesson. There is random chaotic pain because we live in a random chaotic world.

But this world is temporary. It is ephemeral. The grass is going to wither and the flower is going to fade.

And we have to weigh that against an eternal perspective in an eternal perspective. It's like having some other have a cut stitched up. It hurts in the moment, but long term, I'll put up with a little bit of hurt so that I don't get infected and die.

Got a cavity, go through a little bit of discomfort, almost no discomfort depending on your dentist. But whatever discomfort there is, look at the long term. I've got this tooth for years and years to come.

We understand that a momentary discomfort or discomfiture is worth a beneficial outcome that lasts. And that is the explanation for pain and suffering on this earth. It's a big deal if this life is all you have, because you have not accepted eternal life.

You've not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and you don't have an eternity to dwindle your discomfort down to nothing. Yeah, now you had a hard life and then you die and then you go to the judgment and then you're gone. But for those who by the grace of God in Jesus Christ enter into the eternal future, think way down some galactic distance.

Will we remember much about this life? How much do you remember about the year you were five? You fell, you bumped your knee, you got bruises, you got sunburns, you may have gotten measles or mumps or chickenpox. You may have had all kinds of trauma. I can't tell you a single thing that happened when I was five.

I would have to triangulate from where did we live and what probably... I don't have a memory. I can remember pain that others had. I remember when my little brother stepped on a tack in the driveway and it was in his foot and I was there and my sister was there and my mother pulled that tack out and a little spurt of blood went out about eight inches and my sister nearly fainted.

She went into hysterics. My brother was relieved. My sister was traumatized.

I don't think either one of them have a memory of that event. They were young. But balance something against eternity and you realize that God knows what he's doing and eternity matters.

This being ready matters. So number one from Revelation 19, get ready, be ready, stay ready. Readiness, fitness, the Marine Corps, the military, everybody is all about readiness.

You don't know what's coming up, so be ready. The second thing is the opportunity to receive the information to be ready comes through messengers. We don't get dazzled by the Apostle John because he wrote this book.

We don't get dazzled by the angel or the human messengers that delivered it to him and we don't get dazzled by people who write commentaries or teach classes or preach from the pulpit or write books or whatever in helping us to understand it. It is the message. It is the words of this book, the words of this prophecy.

Remember the second reference to this messenger in 22. He said, I am of those who with you keep the words of this book. So important.

This has changed our whole perspective. Don't you think in this study that we are studying it with

the primary purpose of keeping it ourselves, not worrying about what somebody is going to do in the tribulation, although it helps to understand it, but observe, interpret and apply. That's our goal.

Well, what is the upshot here? After the messenger ensures that John doesn't get his eyes on the messenger instead of the message, John sees in verse 11, chapter 19, heaven opened, behold, a white horse. He who sat on him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he judged and makes war. Here's my question.

You ready? Are you ready? Are there stables in heaven? Are there angels who keep heavenly horses? Over and over again, we've seen horses and horsemen in this book. You see it in the Old Testament. The prophet prays, Lord, open my servant's eyes, and he looks and he sees the chariots and horsemen of God on the hills surrounding.

Are there really spiritually invisible yet existent horses? I don't know. I tend to think that as with the seals, the first four seals, and here's a rider and a horse, as with the visions in Zechariah, the horses amongst the myrtle trees and such, I think these are representative of something else. So if it's something else, what might it be? I don't know.

It says that the Lord rides a white horse. Is it a horse that, and there are others, there are many horses, and there's some sort of an angelic animal kingdom, if you will. I kind of doubt it.

I think it is representative. Horses represent strength. They represent agility and speed.

And the Lord Jesus is coming in power. The horse is white because white is the color of righteousness. In some cases, it's pseudo-righteous.

You think back to the scarlet harlot who wears fine linen. She is robed in white, but it's like the whitewashed sepulcher. Inside, she's full of dead men's bones.

She's got a cup full of the blood of the saints. But she wants people to think she's righteous, and so she's wearing white that she doesn't deserve. This is kind of like, you know, they used to make a thing out of women who had been sleeping around, and then when they got married, they wore a white bride dress, and people said, well, she shouldn't be wearing white because she's not pure.

White represents genuine purity, genuine holiness, and the horse represents strength. And this, of course, is the appearance of the Lord Jesus, His coming into the world, not as a baby, not in weakness, not as a servant, come to suffer and bear sin. This is not the suffering servant.

This is the conquering king. And so He has the attributes and the accouterments of a king. Kings ride the best horses in the realm.

Kings have majesty and are amazingly impressive. If you want an interesting exercise, read eyewitness accounts of Robert E. Lee riding amongst Confederate troops during the Civil War.

He had a presence and a charisma that dazzled people.

He had a quiet dignity, and there are dozens and dozens and dozens of accounts that I have read about Robert E. Lee riding into a camp or walking among the troops, and people knew that they were immediately in the presence of greatness. It was the way he carried himself, and I think a lot of it was his Christian faith and his peace and his strength were grounded in his Christian faith. Robert E. Lee, T.J. Jackson, so many.

I've got a book. It's hard to find, but it's called Christ in the Camp, and it is a thick book that details how much Christianity was present and active in those days. So he comes on a white horse, and he is called faithful and true, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

Notice it is possible to make war and be righteous in so doing. There are righteous wars. God sent his Old Testament people into warfare.

You would be shocked if you haven't already seen it at the vociferous, bitter, acrimonious criticism from Christians about those who choose to serve in the military, that it is the most unchristian thing, and that one of the glories of the early church is that they were pacifists, and they were like the Quakers and the Amish and the others who completely refused to do any kind of military service, that military service is heinous and bad. Well, tell that to the Lord Jesus. He in righteousness is making war, and in the same way that taking a life in other contexts is not intrinsically evil, it depends on why you do what you do.

Why are you doing what you're doing? God takes lives, sometimes in great numbers. Is he evil because he took a human life? The Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord, and there are righteous causes. David was a man of war.

David achieved the peace that enabled Solomon to have the peaceable kingdom. It is a picture of the strife and warfare in this life, both spiritual and physical, that is going to result in the millennial kingdom later. So don't let anyone in the Christian realm start engaging in unwarranted criticism.

David said in the Old Testament, blessed be the Lord who teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight. If David had been a pacifist, Goliath would have, they'd still be sitting in the plane, unable to move forward. It was David's ability to make war that God used to establish the nation of Israel, and David's greater son does the same thing.

So the Bible is not anti-war. It is anti-murder. It is anti-wrong-headed war, and there are decisions to be made.

If you think your national government is engaged in a manifestly unjust and evil war, you might have to make a decision about getting out, but that's a subject for another time. The Lord Jesus here is obviously making righteous war. In righteousness, he makes war and judges.

His eyes are like a flame of fire. This is his ability to burn through subterfuge and hypocrisy and

the masks that people wear, the prevarications and the false stories that are told. His eyes burn right through that and get at the heart of the matter, and he righteously judges, and for those who need to be warred upon, he makes war.

That's true now. It will be true then. This is a good place for us to pause and take our break.

We'll enjoy a little bit of fellowship and special music, and when we come back, we will resume and move forward quite a ways here in Chapter 19.