

Revelation 19-20 • The Wedding Supper and Battle of Armageddon

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Revelation chapter 19, open your Bible there please. Revelation chapter 19 as we get started here. Really, these last 4 chapters of Revelation were, I probably on our last 2 weeks here because I'm planning on taking 2 chapters tonight. We'll see if we get through it all, but that's the plan.

We are nearly at the end of the great tribulation period. You'll remember that last week we covered in chapter 17 and 18 the fall of religious Babylon and the fall of commercial Babylon. And those references to Babylon are pictures of man's defiance and rebellion in those particular 2 areas.

And by the way, if you're still, if you're a little bit unclear on the timeline of these events, I understand that's very common sort of a thing. But I created a timeline a few years back and it is available on our website. In fact, if you go to the page, the Revelation page, there's a button there to click and download that pdf and it gives you basically a timeline for essentially all of the last day's events. So, if you just go to CCOntario.com forward slash revelation (ccontario.com/revelation), you will find a button there that will give you that pdf so again, it's called [the last day's timeline](#).

Okay, all right, chapter 19. We've been dealing with a lot of judgment up to this point. We're ready for a little celebration, so that's what we're going to be getting into, at least in part here in this chapter, because John begins this chapter by saying:

¹ *“After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! ...” (ESV)*

Now, that's an interesting thing. He's using a Hebrew word, but he's, it's basically the Greek transliteration of a Hebrew word “Hallelujah” which is praise God, he says he hears this in heaven.

¹ *“... Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,*

² *“for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.” (ESV)*

And so wonderful that John hears this multitude, but we immediately ask who is the multitude? Well, we were introduced to the multitude back in Revelation chapter 7 when we saw the people that were saved out of the great tribulation.

So, these are the tribulation saints, and now we see this multitude in heaven along with the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures who are celebrating now the judgements of God upon the anti-Christ and the systems of the world that he controlled during the tribulation period.

In verse 3, it says:

³ *“Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! ...” (ESV)*

Once again, borrowing that Hebrew word “praise God” which by the way occurs 4 times in this chapter, and it says:

³ *“... The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”*

⁴ *And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne, saying, “Amen. (And there it is again) Hallelujah!” (ESV)*

And then this is interesting. It says:

⁵ *“And from the throne came a voice saying, “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.”” (ESV)*

Now, this is the second time in the book of Revelation that John hears a voice coming from the throne, and it's fascinating to me that the voice from the throne itself is heard to say, or to give I suppose, I should say, a call to praise.

And it's interesting I read through some different commentators on this verse to kind of see what their take was. And they said, well, it's obviously, it's not, God's saying this, this must be an angel. And I don't know if he's a ventriloquist angel who can throw his voice, so that it seems to come from the throne.

I don't have a problem with God calling us to praise, to praise Him. I don't have any problem with that. And it seems that some commentators do, they're concerned, if we kind of make it sound like God is saying to us, praise Him and fear His name and so forth, that's somehow wrong. Well, it's not wrong because it is what He is worthy to receive and there's nothing inappropriate about it at all.

In fact, there's a lot of things that people read in the Bible that they think are inappropriate for God. One of the, one question I get quite often is where God says that he's a jealous God, and people will write and they'll say, I thought jealousy was a bad thing. Well, it is if you've got a sinful nature, but do you know that there are things that can be expressed without a sinful nature? Therefore, without sin, therefore without anything inappropriate about them.

God is jealous for you and me. His jealousy is predicated upon caring for you. Our jealousy, my jealousy as a human being is predicated on caring for me. That's what makes human jealousy inappropriate and wrong and something that we shouldn't do.

But God can be jealous and completely without sin, okay. So, when He calls us, to offer a praise and to fear His name, there's nothing inappropriate about it. So, you know the fact that John hears this voice coming from the throne, I think it's coming from the throne of God. And there you go. John goes on to say in verse 6:

⁶ *“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude (and he describes it in 2 other ways), like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, (so here's this voice that he describes in these 3 different ways) crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.*

⁷ *Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;*

⁸ *it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.” (ESV)*

And so, John hears at this point in this timetable, this loud and jubilant praise that comes from heaven with this multitude of voices, or at least what sounds like it praising God. But the reason for the exuberant praise is that the time has come for the wedding of the lamb, and we're told here that the bride has made herself ready. So, the lamb is obviously Jesus and the bride is us, and this is weird for men. I know we men, we have a hard time seeing ourselves as brides.

As well, we should, but that's not really, we're not talking about anything that relates to gender at this particular point. The bride is simply the group that marries the lamb that comes into this marriage with the lamb. And this is something that we get the dots connected for us in a few different passages in the New Testament.

One of them in his Ephesians, chapter 5, we'll put it up on the slide for you. It says:

Ephesians 5:28-32 (ESV)

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore (and now he's quoting Genesis chapter 2) a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." (Now look at this last statement, he says) This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

And so, Paul is making the connection. He's drawing a line between the dots on the page, and the first dot is the picture of human marriage between a husband and a wife, and the role of the husband to love his wife in a sacrificial way, whereby he lays down his life for her. And then relating that now to the relationship of Jesus and His church, His bride, for whom He laid down His life.

And Paul says, I'm talking about Christ in the church. Well, actually he's talking about both, but he's relating it to Christ in the church. So, we know that the church is the bride. We know that the church is the one for whom Christ laid down His life. The Apostle Paul refers to this also in his second letter to the Corinthians. Let me show you this on the slide, from chapter 11 verse 2, it says, he says:

2 Corinthians 11:2 (ESV)

...For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

This is a beautiful statement that Paul is making that carries the idea of Jewish, a Jewish wedding, or a Jewish marriage relationship from betrothal to consummation.

And it's not something that we typically think about a lot. In our culture, A couple gets engaged and then they might go through a shorter long engagement

period, and then finally they get married if they decide to go through with it, and if they decide to break off the engagement, it's really not a big thing in our culture.

In fact, if somebody breaks off their engagement for whatever reason, we will usually say something like, well, better now than later. Well, that wasn't the way it was in Jewish culture. When you got betrothed, it was a legally binding arrangement that you entered into as a couple, and you literally, even during the betrothal period, referred to the other person as your spouse.

The man would refer to the woman as his wife and the wife would refer, the woman would refer to the man as her husband, even though they had not come together and gotten married yet, even though they're just still betrothed. Well, obviously that's something more than just our engagement period of today, right.

In fact, it was so binding, that to break a betrothal required a divorce. If you read in the early pages of Luke it, we were told that when Joseph found out that Mary was with child, he had in mind to divorce her quietly, right? Well, they weren't even married, but that's what it took to break a betrothal, right.

Now you begin to understand a little bit about what Paul is saying, but there's one other element of the Jewish wedding or relationship that you need to know about, and that is that after a couple was betrothed, the bridegroom would go away for a period of time to go and build his home, and the place where he and his bride would come together and ultimately consummate the relationship, the bridal chamber, if you will.

But he would go to build it under the watchful eye of his father and only his father would know when he had finished to his father's satisfaction and where his father would then release him to go and get his bride. Sometimes it would take up to a year. There are certain times when it would take even longer and the groom never knew when his dad was going to say, all right, son, you're ready, go get her.

And that's one of the reasons Jesus said, "no man knows the day of the hour, not even the son, only the father knows" because this was in keeping with the Jewish marriage ceremony. (Matthew 24:36) But it was incumbent upon the bride during this time of betrothal to maintain a chaste attitude and posture as she waited in anticipation for her bridegroom to come get her. She must be chaste, she must remain pure.

Now take a look again at 2 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul says:

2 Corinthians 11:2 (ESV)

...For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

What Paul's saying is, you're waiting on your bride groom, now stay pure. I'm jealous for you with a godly divine jealousy that you might stay pure.

Now, the fact of the matter is, although that is our earnest desire, we do mess up along those lines. We don't always stay pure, do we? There are times like the prodigal son, we wander away from the love and grace of the Father. Isn't it great that the Father's heart is still to bring us back and that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, keeps on cleansing us from sin, and that's the beautiful thing.

So that you see, when we do stand before Him as that chased bride, even though we know that we've had to, we've had many stumblings along the way and we've had to go many times before the throne of grace to find forgiveness and strength to help us in our time of need. Still, we stand before Him in His righteousness and it's a beautiful thing.

So, John goes on here and he writes in verse 9:

⁹ *“And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” (ESV)*

So, we need to stop here now again for a moment and talk about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And by the way, this is what Jesus spoke about at the Last Supper. You remember He was having the last supper with the disciples, that was the last meal that He had with them, but it was even more significant than that.

He said something to them about the fact that He wasn't going to do this again until the certain time came to pass. It's in Matthew 26 up on the slide for you, goes like this.

Matthew 26:29 (ESV)

“I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

He's talking about, at the marriage supper, because this was a very common, once again in a marriage, a wedding feast or a wedding supper, if you will, it

was very common for the wine to flow. We know from the marriage that Jesus attended in Cana of Galilee, that was the case. (John 2:1–11) And we know that because it was a time of feasting in a time of celebration, and even though they watered down their wine so that it was less powerful or whatever, still it was wine. Yeah, so, Jesus says I'm not going to drink this again until I drink it with you again.

Now, in traditional Jewish culture, and we're going to be talking about this here tonight, we call this the “Marriage Supper”, but it's really better referred to as the “Marriage Feast”, because when we think of the word “marriage supper”, it sounds like they got together and had a meal. Like we do sometimes after some weddings, you have a reception and there's a meal served and there's a bit of celebration, and then you're done.

Oh, no, not the Jews, so don't think of a wedding supper like we had a meal and we left and went home. This would go on for like a week, or up to a week. They would spend days celebrating and feasting and during this time the bride and the groom would be treated literally like royalty. And it was a really a wonderful, wonderful time.

And so, it's interesting how this traditional Jewish wedding is reflective of our salvation, I mean, from the beginning to the end. And I'm not going to, last time I taught through the book of Revelation I, went through all of the steps of the traditional Jewish wedding and I connected them with Bible verses that everything from the father picking out a bride for his son, which happened, and that happened with us too. The Father chose us in Him, right? Before the foundation of the world and all the way to the end, into the consummation.

And I'm not going to go through all that tonight because it's all available on our website. Once again, if you go to our website, CCOntario.com, forward slash, Revelation (ccontario.com/revelation), you will see yet another button there, and it says the [Ancient Jewish Wedding](#).

And so, click on that and you'll get a [PDF](#) that'll go through all of the steps of the wedding and how they apply, how all those things apply. I've talked about just some of them tonight, but they're beautiful, how it connects to our salvation and what we're waiting on our bridegroom to come do, which is to come get his bride and to take us away and carry us away and have that wedding celebration or the wedding itself, and then the wedding celebration that comes after it.

But the thing that we need to look at here first is, who is invited to this marriage supper, to this feast? Because that's what this angel says to John, he says, he tells him to write this down.

⁹ “...*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.* ...” (ESV)

So, who was invited? Well, we've already made the point that the body of Christ is the bride and a bride doesn't have to get invited to her own wedding or wedding reception or marriage feast or whatever. So, this isn't you and this isn't me, okay? So, when you read through Revelation and you see this, “*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper.*” You ask yourself, well, who is invited to the marriage supper?

Because we're the bride, Jesus is the groom, right? Well, this is going to be the rest of the saints who are not strictly speaking the bride of Christ. And one of the challenges that I've seen in Christians in kind of understanding some of these things is really kind of laying hold in their heart and mind how God treats different groups or how God even distinguishes between different groups in the Bible.

Because even though we're all God's people, okay, and that's an important thing. And I've had people ask, in fact, if you watched our latest Q&A, somebody had a question and said, are there different levels in heaven? And I said, no, I don't believe there are different levels in heaven. I don't think you attain to a higher level of heaven than somebody else based on this, that, or the other thing.

There are different rewards in heaven, most definitely, very clearly that is told us in the word but it's not like some people are going to be on a higher level or a higher plain. I believe that those who are redeemed, by Christ, are redeemed by Christ and so forth.

But, that doesn't mean that everybody is the same group or that people and groups aren't distinguished differently from one another and so forth. We've made the point many times that God had a unique plan for the Nation of Israel that is unique from all other groups. Well, the only other group really on the earth are Gentiles; you have Jews and Gentiles. We've always said that God has a unique plan for the Nation of Israel. Well, the body, the Bible also tells us that God has also a different plan for the remnant of the people of Israel.

And that means the believing covenant faithful who are part of Israel. That's a different group frankly, within the same element. We then get to the New

Testament and we know that God has a different plan for the body of Christ. Israel is not referred to as the body of Christ, it is differentiated from the body of Christ. Even the remnant of Israel is not considered the body of Christ. So, there's a different designation, a different differentiation.

And then as we've seen here a few times in the Book of Revelation, we have this multitude of people who get saved during the great tribulation period, who come out of the great tribulation by, they put their faith in Jesus during that time and are martyred for their faith.

We call them the “Tribulation Saints”, they are not the church, they are not the bride of Christ, they are differentiated from the bride of Christ. They are saved and as we're going to see here a little bit later, they're going to rule and reign with Christ during the millennial kingdom, but they have a different designation.

That's not a different level, we're all going to be saved the same, okay. And so, there are different plans for each these of these groups that correspond to their specific relationship in God's overall plan of salvation. So, we know that the church is the bride of Christ, so those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb are going to be, of course, the angels, but also, the saints who are distinct from the bride.

And we read on here now in Revelation 19:10, and you'll notice that John is just overwhelmed by this whole thing and in fact, he, his emotional state causes him to make a bit of a mistake here. It says:

¹⁰ *“Then I fell down at his feet (meaning the angel) to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. ...” (ESV)*

And what is the angel saying to John? Well, that's very simple, he saying that no created being is worthy to receive worship, okay. It's pretty easy, isn't it? He says, “*worship God*”.

Now an angel said to John, “don't do that”, right. Do you think an angel is greater than Jesus? Jesus received worship, but He didn't rebuke anybody. Why is that? Because He deserved to be worshiped and why did He deserve to be worshiped? Well, that's just what the angel said, “*Worship God*”. Worship God and Him alone.

So, the reason Jesus could receive worship is because He is God, the angel could not because he is not. And then we have this final remark in verse 10 that says:

¹⁰ “... *For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit (and the word spirit can be translated breath, breath) of prophecy.*” (ESV)

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit or the breath of prophecy? It's an interesting statement, isn't it? I pondered it for a long time this afternoon, and I even read some other commentators who I respect and I like, and everybody kind of has a little bit different slant on exactly what it means, and I'm not really sure except just beyond what he's saying.

I mean, at face value, the testimony or the witness of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, of real true prophecy. Now, as we move on here in this chapter, we come to the battle of Armageddon and this means that we're right at the end of the great tribulation because the battle of Armageddon is the last event of the great tribulation period.

In verse 11 it says:

¹¹ “*Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*” (ESV)

Who is John seeing here? Well, obviously this is Jesus, but if it's not in abundantly clear in this first verse, it will be as we keep reading. But I want you to notice something about Jesus as He comes forth. He comes to judge and to make war, He comes to judge and to make war, okay? But, this He does in righteousness, and that's the point of what John is saying “in righteousness He judges, in righteousness He makes war”. There's been a lot of unrighteous wars in this world, a lot of even illegal wars, as we might call them, unjust wars. This is a war of perfect righteousness. Verse 12.

¹² “*His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, (which of course means crowns) ...*” (ESV)

I almost kind of wish the ESV would've just put crowns in there because we don't usually use that word “diadems”, although it does differentiate the kind of a crown that is being worn here.

¹² “... *and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.*” (ESV)

So obviously that's not going to help us out as far as determining his identity. But look what it goes on to say in verse 13:

¹³ *“He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.” (ESV)*

And that of course signs it or seals it right there that we're talking about Jesus. You'll remember how John began his gospel in John chapter 1, verse 1 up on the slide. John wrote:

John 1:1 (ESV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jesus is the Word of God, and he tells us there very clearly that we are talking about Jesus. So, guys, this is the second coming, okay?

This is what we call the second coming when Jesus comes for His bride, that's not the second coming; that's the rapture of the church. And so, we need to differentiate those two. Jesus doesn't actually come to earth when He comes for His bride, Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 4, we will meet Him in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

So, we will obviously rise to meet Him in the air. So, this is his coming through to Earth and it says in verse 14:

¹⁴ *“And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.*

¹⁵ *From his mouth comes a sharp sword ...” (ESV)*

Isn't that interesting? Because we know that the picture of the sword, that is the word of God, right.

¹⁵ *“... with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*

¹⁶ *On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.” (ESV)*

Even as we sang tonight. So, John is making it abundantly clear for all of us that he sees Jesus riding on this white horse with the hosts of Heaven coming. And He's, and we know from Zechariah that he's going to be coming to the aid of Israel who is under the oppressive armies of this collective army of world powers under the control of the anti-Christ; the beast. And this is the reason that Jesus is coming at this time.

And he goes on to say in verse 17:

¹⁷ “Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, ...” (ESV)

Now, this is not the supper the marriage supper of the lamb, this is a feast to the birds of the air from the dead from this war, this battle of Armageddon.

And that's what he says in verse 18:

¹⁸ “to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.”” (ESV)

And then in verse 19, it says:

¹⁹ “And I saw the beast (and that is the anti-Christ) and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.

²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.” (ESV)

Now I'll tell you right here in verse 21, it appears that the battle is going to be so decisive that Jesus is going to fight it with His word. And that seems to be what it says it is telling us here that with the powerful word. Now remember, Jesus is the one who is also the creator, so He created everything with His word. We know that from Genesis chapter 1, but it appears, and it says right here in verse 21 that these:

²¹ *“And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, ...” (ESV)*

So, I don't know how that's going to work exactly, I don't know if He's just going to speak a word against them at that point and it just slays, we don't know. We'll find out because we'll be there and it'll be pretty cool.

Chapter 20, okay. Unlike the 1, the chapter, we just read through, this chapter doesn't include any recorded speech that John heard. This is basically just John narrating what he sees in this ongoing vision. And let me just tell you this, what he sees in this chapter spans a period of 1,000 years, okay? So, get ready to do some really fast time travel. We're just going to speed through time.

Here we go. Verse 1.

¹ *“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.”*

² *And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,*

³ *and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.” (ESV)*

There's a few things about this that I want to talk about. First thing that I find very interesting is that this is an unnamed angel. Doesn't say that it's Michael or anybody else, who we know that Michael is the kind of the captain of the Lord's armies and so forth, and he must be a pretty big dude but this is an unnamed angel who single handedly binds Satan with a chain and cast him into the pit.

I find that interesting. But I want you to notice here in this passage that it says that Satan is bound for 1,000 years, and this 1,000 year period is what we then see as, or I should say, what ushers in for us, what we call the millennial kingdom, also referred to as the messianic kingdom.

And it is a time on the earth, which is going to be wonderful. There will be peace, there will be prosperity. Jesus will be reigning over the earth, David will be reigning over Israel, and the rest of the saints will be ruling and reigning under Jesus in other obviously parts of the world.

But it's going to be, I mean, can you imagine what it's going to be like? Well, we can't really, but to think about what it's going to be like with Jesus on the

throne and no devil. Now, there are going to be people on the earth who survived the great tribulation, and that means they're going to be mortal.

The church has already received our resurrection bodies, okay, so that doesn't include you. When Jesus comes for his church, Paul says that we are going to be changed, literally transformed in the twinkling of an eye. He says that the dead in Christ are going to rise first, and then we who are left on the earth will be transformed, okay. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Now that means we're going to receive at that time our new resurrection bodies. Can anybody say amen? (audience repeats "Amen"). Thank you. I don't, I mean, the older I get the more I'm looking forward to that. Sometimes I get up in the morning, I'm like, okay, Lord, anytime, bring on the trumpet, anytime here, that'd be great.

But, so, we are not going to be those who are mortal and because we have already put off the flesh, we no longer will have a sinful nature, okay. So that's going to be a unique, and we are now the bride of Christ. So, this is where we are in essence. It doesn't specifically say what we're going to be doing, but it's going to be a wonderful time during this 1,000 year period.

And again, there will be people who survive the great tribulation, which means that those people are going to grow old. And during that time of their life on the earth, they will marry, they will bear children, they will have generations and we will witness this during this 1,000 year period where people will live and die.

Although the Bible says that life spans during the millennial kingdom will be greatly increased, and it says that anybody who dies at the age of 100 is going to be considered a young person. But this is going to be happening. So, the world is going to be kind of repopulated, if you will, by those who are mortal during this time. And that's why John tells us that after the 1,000 years are completed, Satan is going to be released from the pit for one final attempt to sway the hearts of mortal man.

And you might be thinking, why don't we just leave him in the pit because that kind of seems appropriate, let's just leave him there. But remember, there are people during this 1,000 year period who are born and raised and Satan is going to be released from the pit for the same reason Satan was allowed into the garden, because people must be tested.

Those, who have that choice and so forth, they must be tested and this will be a final work of Satan but it will, it'll get over very quickly. But let me give you a little insight back into what the millennial kingdom is going to be like.

I don't want to skip over this. This is too cool. Let me show you this from Isaiah chapter 11 on the slide. I just love this. It says:

Isaiah 11:6-9 (ESV)

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion (this is weird) shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child (now remember, children who nursed in back ancient times could be up to 2 and 3 years old) shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

This is just a, this is a picture of the millennial kingdom. Even the animal kingdom is at peace during this time, even animals that were predators will no longer be predators and they will lie down and sleep with the animals they used to hunt and kill and eat.

So that just gives you a sense, of what things are going to be like. But now we, we have to deal with this release of Satan and notice in verse 4, John says:

⁴ *“Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. ...” (ESV)*

So, we know that Jesus is a judge but it appears that we're seeing here from the word and frankly elsewhere in the scripture, that He's going to share the job of judging. Isn't that interesting? Have you ever looked at this passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 6? Let me show you on the slide. He says:

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (ESV)

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

Now this could be beyond the body of Christ, he just uses the word saints. Yes, because that really applies to the people of God.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (ESV)

And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

You'll remember he made these statements in the context of them going to court with one another. He says:

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (ESV)

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

I assume when he talks of angels, he's referring here to fallen angels, demonic spirits and we're going to be involved. Now I, we know that the other saints, like tribulation saints are going to be involved in this too. We'll see this in just a little bit. Now we're still in verse 4, he goes on to say,

⁴ *“... Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded ...” (ESV)*

Now I need to tell you there that Greek word beheaded means executed in a larger, more general sense and it includes people who've been beheaded, but it also includes people who've just been executed through any other through any other means. But they just use this, it's kind of like leprosy, how leprosy can refer to leprosy or a myriad of other skin diseases, well, so can beheaded, it's general execution. He says:

⁴ *“...Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. ...” (ESV)*

So, who is that? He's talking specifically about the tribulation saints, okay. So, he sees these souls who had given their lives, who have been executed during the tribulation period for their witness for Jesus Christ. And he says here, as we go on reading:

⁴ *“...They came to life ...” (ESV)*

Now that means that they received their resurrection body.

Remember, he saw the souls and the souls are with the Lord, but now they're joined with their new resurrection bodies, okay. And he, and look what it says about these tribulation saints:

⁴ “...and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (ESV)

So, who else is going to reign? The tribulation saints as well. We know we are, we know the tribulation saints are going to rule and reign during that time. So, John pauses here in verse 5 to make kind of a parenthetical comment. So, think of this in your mind, as in parentheses, he says:

⁵ “*The rest of the dead ...*” (ESV)

And by that, he's referring to those people who died outside of Christ, who died outside of faith, who rejected the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and God's purpose for their lives. He says:

⁵ “...*did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. ...*” (ESV)

That's where the parenthesis ends, okay.

And then, he returns to speaking of the tribulation saints and the resurrection that they enjoyed. And he says:

⁵ “...*This is the first resurrection.*” (ESV)

So, you have to see that parenthesis there, or you're going to get confused, okay. Because it almost sounds like he's talking about the rest of the dead not coming back to life and that's the first resurrection. No, no, no, they don't get to be a part of the first resurrection. They missed out on the first resurrection, and they only are raised to condemnation at the great white throne judgment which, we're going to see.

So, you have to see the parentheses there and yeah and something else. When he says, “*this is the first resurrection*”, this has confused some people and they thought, well now wait a minute, weren't we the saints already raised, weren't those who are dead in Christ raised at the coming of the rapture?

Yes, they were, yes, they were. And that happened, I believe, prior to the great tribulation. So, we have the rapture of the church, the resurrection of the dead saints, the dead in Christ, we have the tribulation period and then we have the raising or the giving of new resurrection bodies to the tribulation saints.

And that's what John is saying when he says, “*this is the first re resurrection*”. He's referring to the whole event of resurrection from rapture to the end of the tribulation period. That is the first resurrection. So, it's referring to an order of

resurrection work, not just a single event. Think of it, people like we refer to the day of the Lord.

We know that when we talk about the day of the Lord, we're not talking about just a day, we're talking about a protracted period of time, right? But it's referred to as the day of the Lord. And we understand it that way, and it's the same thing when we refer to this as the first resurrection, we're talking about the event of resurrections that take place between the rapture and prior to the beginning of the millennial kingdom. That is, they are, the first resurrection.

And that's why John writes in verse 6.

⁶ *“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.” (ESV)*

And that refers to us and the tribulation saints, okay. So, John goes on now:

⁷ *“And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison*

⁸ *and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, ...” (ESV)*

And I believe John is using that term “Gog” and “Magog” because it's an Old Testament term, but he's using it to describe in a figurative sense, the enemies of God, which are going to come from the 4 corners of the earth, if you will.

And he says that they will, they:

⁸ *“... to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.*

⁹ *And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,*

¹⁰ *and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (ESV)*

So, you see, you can really, people talk about this as the final battle, but you really can't even refer to it as a battle because it's like they don't even get around to fighting.

Now as John gets into verse 11 he says:

¹¹ “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.” (ESV)

And by the way, when John says, “I saw a great white throne,” this is why we call it the “great white throne judgment.” So, the great white throne judgment, and this is a judgment for the purpose of sentencing. Don’t think of this as like a trial, think of this as like the sentencing that happens after someone is found guilty, all right? Because these people are already their guilt is not just assumed, it is confirmed.

And so John says:

¹² “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.” (ESV)

And we find out in the next verse, that it also has to do with whether their name was not found. And it says:

¹³ “And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.”

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.” (ESV)

And in verse 15 it says:

¹⁵ “And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (ESV)

But I want to go back and take a look at verse 14 one more time, because this is important. Please look with me again at verse 14:

¹⁴ “Then Death and Hades...” (ESV)

Death is the process of dying and being dead, no longer being physically alive. And of course, that causes there to be a need for a place for the dead to be after their physical bodies expire, and that's Hades.

¹⁴ *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. ...*” (ESV)

Which John tells us “*is the second death*”. The first death is physical death, but this is fascinating, death is actually done away with. It's not just like God erased it, He made it suffer. Isn't that fascinating? I mean, you don't think of death being personified in that way necessarily. And I'm not necessarily saying that He's personifying it here in these words, but he is saying that these things are thrown into the lake of fire and you have to say, God, isn't that kind of dramatic?

Well, not when you consider the fact that God calls death an enemy; it's an enemy. It was never intended to exist, and this just really messes with some people's minds. God never intended man to experience death, it was never part of his plan. Can you imagine a God who would factor in death in his creation and then call it good? I can't, I mean, that would be beyond cruel because death is not good. It's never been good, and it's always been an enemy and the grave is a result of death and so it too has to be done away with.

But this is all according to God's prophetic foretelling. 700 years before Christ was even born upon the earth, God foretold that He was going to do away with death. This has always been part of His plan always. Let me show you this on the slide from Isaiah chapter 25. It says:

Isaiah 25:7-8 (ESV)

And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

Isn't that lovely? God's going to do away with death, and He told us a long time ago He was going to do away with it, and we're just waiting. The grave has already, death has already been conquered, it just hasn't been annihilated yet. I mean, I wish it had been, but that's one of the reasons why we don't fear death anymore, because He's taken the sting of death away.

When we die, we, it's like walking through a door into the presence of the Lord. Oh, hey, how you doing? Here I am, Praise God, all right. From whom all blessings flow, yeah.

I want to remind you that the lake of fire was also not intended for man, death wasn't intended for man and the lake of fire was never intended for man. No, wasn't intended, and we know this because Jesus told us and His word is authority. Let me show you Matthew 25.

Matthew 25:41 (ESV)

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire (Look at this) prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

Not prepared for man. Does that mean man's not going to go there? No, some unfortunately will, but they will go there by their own choosing, they will choose to go.

The Bible tells us very clearly that God is not willing that any should be lost, but that all would come to repentance. God doesn't want anybody to be lost, but he also gave us a free will and he allows us to choose, and it's up to you to choose. (2 Peter 3:9) You've been made aware, this is how a person is saved, it's a free gift, it's free.

We are born again by accepting the free gift of Jesus Christ on the cross. What He did for us, He paid our penalty, He bore our curse, He literally became a curse for us on the cross. Now, have you accepted that's all it takes to be saved? Do you know one of the biggest questions that I get, and I run into this all the time with Christians, is the question of. I know they'll say, I know I'm saved by grace through faith, but do I have to keep living a holy life to stay saved? Do you know how popular that idea is? And that most Christians would say, yes, you do.

In fact, there's a lot of pastors, a lot of teachers, a lot of people out there who are telling people, great, now that you're saved, wonderful, now you got to hang onto it by living a holy life. Let me explain this very carefully, and I'm not giving license for anybody to live a reckless, sinful life because as Paul says in Romans chapter 6, that is completely inappropriate for those who have been saved. (Romans 6:2) But please understand if you are saved by a free gift from God and then after being saved you must do good works or live a good life to hold onto that, then you are saved by works, period.

People say all the time, I know my salvation, I'm not saved by what I do. But they believe they have to keep themselves saved by being a good person. Hey, that's just, that's, you boil that down and you get rid of all the extraneous words and it's salvation by works. You are saved by what you do, simple as that.

That's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible does not teach that you're saved by your works or that you're kept by your works. In fact, you know the book of the Bible that's right before this one that we're studying right now, the book of Jude ends with this beautiful doxology that says now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his presence. (Jude 1:24)

It's just. He's the one who's able, and He will keep you, and He will cleanse you along the way. And again, that's not a license to go off and live the way you want and to be reckless and to sin. Because, may I suggest to you that the Bible says the wages of sin is death and even for believers, things still die.

When we give ourselves to sin, things still die, marriages die, job opportunities die, relationships with family members that we adore, die. Hey, the wages of sin is still death, even for believers, you won't die spiritually, but there will be things in your life that you'll never get back. So, don't go messing around with God's grace and thinking that I can sin and do what I want and it's not a big deal because I'm forgiven, although the wages of sin is still death.

He, Jesus has just saved us from the second death. That you're saved from, and you'll never have to deal with that because he bought it for you, amen. (audience repeats "Amen"). Let's pray.

Jesus, we love you so much and we love your word, and we thank you for your faithfulness in sharing it, and giving it, revealing it to us, and we praise you, Lord, for the promise of life that is ours through Jesus Christ, the hope of our salvation, we glory in it tonight, and we thank you for it.

You are the one who saves us by your sacrifice on the cross, and you are the one who keeps us by the power of the Spirit, and we rejoice in you today.

In Jesus' precious name, we pray, and all God's people said together. Amen. God bless you. Have a good rest of your evening.