

February 12, 2017

Revelation 19:1-10 **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

Well let's turn in our Bibles please to Revelation chapter 19. We want to read together Revelation chapter 19, verses 1 through 10.

“¹ And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: ² for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. ³ And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. ⁴ And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

“⁵ And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. ⁶ And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ⁸ And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

“⁹ And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Now last week we completed our study of Revelation chapter 18, and there we saw the destruction of Babylon described, and we saw the two opposite responses that were given to its destruction—the response of mourning and the response of rejoicing.

When anti-Christian society is destroyed at the end of this age, the kings of the earth, and the merchants of every kind of goods, and the manufacturers and the suppliers of those goods, will all mourn and weep over the destruction of the world's economic system and the society that flows out of it. And because the world's economic system is destroyed, all of society collapses, and death and mourning and famine is the result. So there is this response of grief and sorrow by the wicked over the economic loss they have suffered when Babylon is destroyed.

But when anti-Christian society is destroyed at the end of this age, the believers, both in heaven and on earth, rejoice, because they are finally delivered from its seduction, and they are finally delivered from its persecution, and they finally receive the justice and the vindication they have longed for from God for all the wickedness that has been done to them by Babylon. Now notice

if you will in chapter 18, verse 20. Verse 20 says, “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.” “Rejoice” is a command given by God to His people—a command that they are glad to obey, and a command which they fully endorse.

And so what we see in Revelation chapter 19, is the glad obedience of the people of God in expressing that joy and praise to God for the destruction of one of Satan’s greatest helpers, and that is the harlot Babylon. God has said, Rejoice, and the people in chapter 19 respond with rejoicing over the destruction of the harlot Babylon.

Now it is the nature of the people of God, that they worship God in response to God’s mighty works. As we behold what God has done in creation, we respond in worship. As we behold what God has done in providence, we respond in worship. As we behold what God has done in redemption, we respond in worship. And as we behold what God has done in judgment, we also respond in worship. All of the works of God, display the glory of God, and that is as equally true of His works of judgment, as it is of His works of redemption and providence and creation.

And so what we see in Revelation chapter 19, verses 1 to 10, is the church worshiping the Lord their God for His mighty work of judgment on Babylon. Babylon, of course, is the great harlot who committed, and who enticed others to commit, spiritual fornication; that is, to worship some other god beside the true God. Babylon was determined to draw people away from God, or if necessary, use persecution to drive them away from God. Babylon betrayed God in every way she could.

Now in contrast to this harlot Babylon is the faithful bride of Jesus Christ, who never wavered in her love for Christ or in her loyalty to Christ. She maintained her virginity, in that she would not commit fornication with another god by worshiping the gods of Babylon. She saw herself as betrothed to Christ, and would not go after another, no matter what the enticements and no matter how great the pressure. The church, the bride of Christ, remained true to Christ.

And so we have these two women set in contrast with one another. We have the harlot Babylon, who is destroyed by Christ, and we have the church, who is married by Christ. The harlot is a symbol of spiritual fornication, but the church is a manifestation of spiritual faithfulness.

So we see these two themes in these first ten verses of Revelation chapter 19. The rejoicing over the judgment of the harlot Babylon, and the rejoicing over the marriage of the bride of Christ. And so it is to these two themes that we’re going to give our attention today, as we look at Revelation 19, verses 1 to 10.

So in the first place then this morning, let us consider together, the rejoicing over the judgment of the harlot Babylon. The rejoicing over the judgment of the harlot Babylon is found in verses 1 through 4. Now you recall that back in chapter 18, we were instructed to rejoice over the destruction of the harlot Babylon. Well here is the response to that instruction, and here is the expression of that rejoicing.

Notice chapter 19 verse 1, “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: ² for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. ³ And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. ⁴ And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.”

Now as we said, this section is the continuation and the conclusion of chapter 18, in which the saints are commanded to rejoice over the fall of Babylon. And here in these opening verses, we see that rejoicing being expressed by the people of God. So after the vision of the fall of Babylon, John now has another vision of the rejoicing of the believers and the worship they give to God for the exercise of His justice in requiting the sins of Babylon.

I want you to notice verse 1. Verse 1 says, “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God.” So in this next vision that begins in chapter 19 and verse 1, John now hears a multitude of people in heaven giving praise to God, and he records the content of their praise for us here.

Now this praise to God opens with the word “alleluia.” This word means “praise Jehovah.” This term and this title for God is taken from the Old Testament, which surprises us not at all, since the book of Revelation is saturated with references and allusions to the Old Testament.

Having declared praise to Jehovah, the multitude of voices out of heaven now gives a number of reason for praising Jehovah by ascribing to Him praise for what He has done, and for the attributes that He possesses.

Notice in verse 1 that having said, Praise Jehovah, Alleluia! the people in heaven first and foremost praise God for providing them with salvation. God has saved them from their sins. God has saved them from His justice. God has saved them from Satan and all his helpers, and in particular, his helper Babylon. No longer will God’s people have to endure either the seduction of anti-Christian society, or the persecution of anti-Christian society. God has saved them. And because they recognize that, they loudly proclaim, Praise Jehovah!

And then, they ascribe to God glory. Notice, “Alleluia; Salvation”—that’s the first thing they ascribe to God. And then secondly, it says, “and glory.” That’s the second thing they ascribe to God. God’s glory is the blinding splendor of His majesty that brings all of creation to fall on their faces before Him, in humility and fear and awe and worship. As they behold the purity of God’s holiness, and as they consider the totality of the outshining of His excellencies, and as they contemplate the infinite worth and value of His divine nature, they cry with one voice, Praise Jehovah! Praise Him for His glory!

And then next, not only do they praise Him for providing salvation; not only do they praise Him for the outshining of His glory; then thirdly, it says, they praise Him for his honor. They ascribe to Him honor—salvation and glory and honor. Now honor is the esteem that is due to God. It is the elevated respect that is given to one that is infinitely superior to us in every way. Who do you honor? People who are superior to you.

So God is honored when He is shown reverence in our attitude towards Him. And God is honored when we show humility in our conduct before Him. When we hold God in the highest regard, when we submit to His authority, when we speak glowingly of His accomplishments, we give Him honor. And as the saints in heaven reflect on the honor that is due to God, they cry out with one voice, Praise Jehovah! He is worthy of honor!

And next, they ascribe to God power. Notice verse 1: Salvation, and glory, and honor, and now, power. This is an exaltation of the strength He has to defeat His foes, to deliver all of His children, and to accomplish all of His purposes, in spite of the opposition of all of the forces of Satan and his helpers arrayed against Him. Nothing is too hard for God, and no one can thwart God. His power is irresistible. None can stay His hand or stop Him from doing as He pleases. And so as the saints in heaven contemplate the power of God, they cry out with one voice, Praise Jehovah! He possesses all power in heaven and in earth.

So this passage opens with this tremendous praise that is thundered out by this multitude of voices in heaven, and they say, Praise Jehovah for His salvation, for His glory, for the honor He deserves, and for the power He exercises. And that brings us to verse 2.

It says in verse 2, “for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.” Now the praise of God continues in verse 2 when the saints in heaven declare of God “true and righteous are his judgments.”

Now it is of course universally true of *all* of God’s judgments that they are true and that they are righteous.

When God passes judgment on someone, it’s always a true judgment. It never overstates or understates the true nature of the situation being judged, or the true facts about what was done. The judgments of God are according to truth.

But His judgments are also righteous judgments; that is, the sentence He passes upon those He judges is always proper and just. God does not pass too harsh of a sentence, nor does God pass too lenient of a sentence upon them for what they have done. His punishments or His rewards are exactly proportionate to the behavior that is being judged by Him. The point is, there is perfect equity in God’s judgments. And as the saints in heaven reflect on the truth of God’s judgments and the righteousness of God’s judgments, they cry out with one voice, Praise Jehovah! Alleluia! The Judge of all the earth will do right.

But having made a general statement about the fact that God's judgments are true and right in every situation, the saints in heaven now speak to the specific judgment that God has exercised upon the great whore who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and who martyred the believers for their faithfulness to Christ, in the latter part of verse 2. What it says there is, "he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." And that judgment was also a true and righteous judgment, just like all His judgments are.

God has avenged the believers for the persecutions that the harlot Babylon carried out against them. And the believers see the truth of that judgement, and they see the righteousness of that judgment in particular, and as they contemplate the specific judgment that God has brought to bear upon the great whore, they cry out once again, Praise Jehovah! That's their conclusion. Verse 3: "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

So as they see the smoke of the ruin of Babylon under the wrath of God, they recognize that this city is the object of God's eternal wrath, and that it will never rise again, and it will lie in smoldering ruins forever and ever and ever, and the smoke of its ruin will rise without end for all eternity, thus indicating that it will never, ever be rebuilt, ever again. Anti-Christian society will never be resurrected and restored, for eternity. As it says in Psalm 19 and verse 9, "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Now notice if you will verse 4. It says, "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia." Here in verse 4, we see the blending of the voices and the worship of all the believers in heaven, represented by the twenty-four elders, and the angels, represented by the four beasts, who you recall back in chapter 4 we saw were seraphim. So both the saints and the angels blend their voices together and blend their worship together to give honor to God who sits on the throne, and with one voice they say, "Amen; Alleluia;" Praise Jehovah.

Now in verse 4, it says in the last phrase, "Amen; Alleluia." Amen is a word of affirmation, it's a word of approval, and it's a word of agreement. When somebody prays a prayer, at the end of that prayer you say, Amen. What you are saying is, I affirm that prayer, I approve of that prayer, and I am in agreement with that prayer. I endorse what was just said, or what was just done.

And so both saints and angels affirm God's judgment on Babylon, they approve of God's judgment on Babylon, and they agree with God's judgment on Babylon. And when they see what God has done, they say with reference to what God has done, Amen. And then they say, Praise Jehovah for what He has done. Psalm 106 and verse 48 says, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord." And so that phrase is lifted right out of Psalm 106 and verse 48, and placed here at the end of verse 4.

That, then, is the rejoicing over the judgment of the harlot Babylon and the praise that is given to God for the truth and the righteousness of the judgment that He has exercised upon her, and the vindication and deliverance that He has provided His servants in the destruction of Babylon.

That brings us then to our second major point this morning. Having seen the rejoicing over the judgment of the harlot Babylon in verses 1 to 4, notice secondly, the rejoicing over the marriage of the bride of Christ in verses 5 to 10.

Now in verse 5, a new voice now speaks directly from the throne. Notice verse 5: “And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.” This exhortation is addressed to all those who fear God and it is addressed to all those who serve God. Both of these behaviors universally characterize the people of God. Everyone who is in heaven is someone who fears God. This means they have a deep reverence for God, and seek to please God in all that they do, because His approval is their greatest delight, and His disapproval is their greatest dread. This is what it means to fear God.

But those in heaven are not only those who fear God, those in heaven are also those who serve God. They recognize that they have been bought with a price, that they do not belong to themselves, and therefore they serve God with their body and with their spirit, which are God’s. And so their chief concern in life is this: What is the will of God for my life in each situation that I am facing? And their chief ambition in life, is to serve God faithfully in every one of those circumstances. This is what it means to be a servant of God. And so as this voice calls out in verse 5 for praise, it calls out for a certain class and category of people to be doing the praising, and it is those who, number one, fear God; and number two, those who serve God.

So who are the saved people in heaven? How can they be identified in this life by their attitude and behavior? They are those who fear God and they are those who serve God. Everyone in heaven shares these characteristics, because everyone in heaven was characterized *by* those things while they lived here on earth. And it is these inhabitants of heaven, who feared and served God while they were here on earth, that the voice from the throne addresses with this exhortation, Praise our God!

When the voice from the throne in heaven addresses those in heaven who fear God and who serve Him, what is their response to this call to praise God? Well, verses 6 and 7 give that response to the call: “⁶ And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia:”—praise Jehovah—“for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

Now John takes special notice of the volume of the praise that is given to God, and he conveys to us that the volume of the praise given to God is overwhelming in its loudness. The praise the saints give to God is likened to the sound of a great multitude speaking in unison. It’s likened to

the sound of a mighty waterfall crashing down on the rocks below with a mighty roar. It's likened to the sound of rolling thunder from a lightning storm that just shakes the creation.

The volume of the praise is overwhelmingly loud because the enthusiasm of the praise is unsurpassingly great. The more excited people are, the louder they become in singing the praises of God. And the multitude of the people in heaven, which no man can number, are all praising God at the top of their lungs with the totality of their enthusiasm, as loudly as they possibly can. And the place just shakes.

And what is the content of their worship? Verse 6: "Alleluia:"—praise Jehovah—"for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." This title speaks volumes about who God is and about why He is to be praised. This name declares His sovereignty, that He is the *Lord* over all things and over all beings. This name not only declares His sovereignty—that He is the Lord, it declares His authority—He is *God*, the highest authority in the universe, from whom there is no appeal. This name declares His power—He is *omnipotent*, and nothing and no one can prevail against Him or overthrow His will.

And as a result of His sovereignty, that He is the Lord; as a result of His authority, that He is God; as a result of His power, that He is omnipotent - as a result of those three things - He reigns. The Lord God Omnipotent, *reigneth*. And what is being said here by these people is that God is in charge, not men. God is in charge, not Satan. God is in charge, not Babylon. This is why we do not need to fear either the present or the future. The reason why we don't need to fear the present or the future is because the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. He will defeat our enemies, He will work all things together for our good, and He will bring us safely to heaven.

Notice if you will verses 7 to 9: "7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

Now here in verses 7 to 9 is the great cause for gladness and rejoicing and giving honor to God, and that is, that the marriage of the Lamb has come. At the end of this age, Christ will consummate His union with His people, and they will live with Him forever and ever. This spiritual marriage that is being spoken of here in verses 7 to 9 has its physical parallel and illustration in biblical Jewish marriages.

Now biblical marriage customs indicates that the father seeks out and selects a bride for his son, just like Abraham did with Isaac. He makes arrangements for a marriage contract, the parties agree to it, and a betrothal is made between the bride and the groom. And a betrothal is like our engagement, but it is far more binding. The betrothal in biblical times was a binding engagement that made the bride and the groom legally a husband and a wife. A betrothal could only be broken by a formal divorce.

You recall that when Joseph found out that Mary, his betrothed wife, was pregnant before they had come together, he purposed to do what? Divorce her, quietly, and not make her a public example of having violated her marriage. Because of the betrothal, legally Joseph and Mary were married, but they had not yet started living together. They had not yet come together.

The reason for this was that there was always a time period that elapsed between the betrothal and the actual consummation of the marriage. This time period allowed the bride to prepare herself and her wedding garment for the actual wedding. It also allowed the groom time to accumulate and pay the dowry to the father of the bride, and prepare a place for him and bride to live. And when an interval of time had passed, the day of the wedding was set, and a huge wedding feast was given. At the wedding feast, the betrothed couple were brought together, to live together from that point forward in the same house, until death did them part.

Now this illustrates beautifully the marriage between Christ and His people. God the Father sought out a bride for His Son, Jesus Christ, and by divine sovereign election, selected a people to be in union with His Son forever; which people He then gave to His Son as a manifestation of the love that He had for His Son. And in due time, He betrothed us to His Son by effectually calling us into union with Christ. We were betrothed to Christ at our conversion when we were saved. We entered into a binding commitment to be married to Christ at our salvation. And we were given the promise of the Spirit, that is, the Spirit's indwelling presence, as the token and the guarantee of the consummation of the marriage in due time.

Paul says in Second Corinthians 11 and verse 2, regarding the believers at Corinth, "for I have espoused (betrothed) you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." And so the believers at Corinth were betrothed to Christ. They were yet virgins, because the marriage had not yet been consummated, though it was concluded legally and contractually at conversion. And now, during this time of interval, Christ is doing His part. Christ paid the dowry by His death on the cross. He paid the price for His bride with His own precious blood.

And then He told us in John 14, verses 1 to 3, that He must go away for awhile in order to prepare a dwelling place for us. And if He goes away, He will come again to receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also, in the mansions that He has prepared for us to dwell in. And so this is the time period we are in now, between the betrothal, which was our salvation, and the wedding feast, when Christ returns to receive us into His home that He is preparing right now, when we will live forever with Him.

And what are we, the bride, doing in this interval? We are making ourselves ready. We are preparing ourselves for the day when our husband returns to receive us into His everlasting home, where, after the great wedding feast, we will live with Him forever in the new heavens, and in the new earth, in those mansions that He is now gone away to prepare for us, and from which He will come again to receive us to Himself.

Now notice verse 7. It says, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” Now here in verse 7 is described the end of this age, when the betrothal period is over and the wedding supper of the Lamb has come, where we who were married to Christ at our conversion will now be brought together with Christ to live with Him forever. All that was promised at our betrothal, all that was promised at our conversion, will now be provided at the wedding feast when He returns.

And how have we made ourselves ready for the wedding day? We have made ourselves ready by remaining faithful to Jesus Christ in the face of persecution, while waiting for Him to return to receive us. We have made ourselves ready by being faithful to Christ in the face of Babylon’s persecutions, maintaining our testimony that Christ is Lord, even though it cost us dearly to do so.

Turn in your Bibles please for a moment to Hebrews chapter 3. Hebrews is a book that counsels patience and perseverance while waiting for Christ to come and receive us. But while we’re waiting, there are tremendous assaults placed upon us to abandon Christ and go after another lover. You know, this happens to military guys all the time while they’re in deployment, right? They get engaged to a girl, and when he gets back, they’re going to get married. And while he’s gone, he’s out there slaying dragons, earning money, looking forward to the day when he comes back to be with his engaged bride. But while he’s gone, there’s lots of guys hitting on her. And it would be a very sad thing if she was unfaithful to him and went after another man while he was gone.

This is the danger we have. Christ has betrothed us to Himself. He’s gone away to prepare a place for us, and while He’s gone, what are we doing, with reference to all those temptations of the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, that keep hitting on us, to draw us away from Christ and draw us into infidelity to Him? This is what’s being spoken of here in Hebrews 3. Notice if you will, verses 12 to 14:

“¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, *if* we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”

That is how we are making ourselves ready for the return of our husband. We are holding our confidence in Him steadfast until the end. In other words, getting ourselves ready means never forsaking Christ, never forsaking loyalty to Him, never abandoning Him to follow after the gods of this world.

And what is the result of being faithful to Christ and faithfully confessing Christ before a hostile world during this waiting period? Notice verse 8: “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” The result of faithfully confessing Christ before a hostile world and remaining loyal to Him until He returns

is that we are given a robe of righteousness as a recognition and as a reward for the faithfulness that we maintained to Christ in His absence.

Christ gives us a wedding garment that admits us to the marriage supper of the Lamb, because we maintained our virginity for Him. We did not commit spiritual fornication with the harlot Babylon by going after other gods while we were waiting for Him to return. We refused Babylon's seductions to worship other gods, we remained true to Christ, and He rewards us for our righteous acts of perseverance and faithfulness to Him by giving us a lovely wedding garment that marks us out as being His true bride, and as being the ones He will live with forever. The robe is the reward for faithfulness in His absence.

Verse 9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." To be called to participate in the wedding feast of the Lamb is the most blessed privilege one could ever experience, and the wonder of it overwhelms the mind, and we are so awestruck at the contemplation of it that we ask, Could it possibly be true—that Christ will return and receive *me* and take me into His house and live with me forever, with all of the spiritual intimacy that this metaphor conveys? And the angel assures John, and the angel assures us, "These are the true sayings of God." This is really going to happen, and this is exactly how it's going to be. Do not doubt it.

Now notice verse 10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me,"—remember, this person is an angel—"And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Now John is so overwhelmed at the vision that he has seen, and the indescribable privilege that it promises, and the immeasurable blessing that it conveys, that he falls down to worship and thank the one who brought him such wonderful news. But the angel immediately corrects him and tells him it is not the messenger that is to be worshiped. He says, I am only a fellowservant with you and of the other believers who possess and who maintain a faithful testimony to and of Jesus Christ. He says, Don't forget who I am. I'm just a fellowservant, alongside you and your fellow believers. He says, You need to worship God.

You know, when I bring you the good news of the gospel, it is such good news that some might be moved to give me inordinate esteem for having brought that news. But the esteem needs to be given to the one who produced the news, not the one who merely conveys it. And that's what the angel is saying: Worship God. He produced this. I just told you about it.

It is the God who has provided all of this that is to be worshiped, not the messenger who simply tells what God has done. All true prophecy testifies of Jesus, all true prophecy focuses on Jesus, all true prophecy points men to Jesus, and it is Jesus who is to be worshiped, not the prophet who

speaks of Him. So, it is the testimony of Jesus that is the essence of prophecy, and any time a prophet starts talking about himself instead of Jesus, he ceases to be a prophet of God.

Well let us then take up the example of the passage before us this morning. Let us praise God for what He has done in the world in His mighty acts of justice. And let us praise God for what He has done in the church, for His mighty acts of salvation.

You know, if you ever wondered why Babylon exists, if you ever wondered why Babylon is so strong, and if you've ever wondered why it's allowed to be so wicked, wonder no more. Babylon exists to prove who will remain faithful to Christ and who will not, during the time between their profession of faith and their coming into the personal presence of Christ. Babylon exists in order to prove who His true bride is.

Instead of seeing that which persecutes us and causes us pain and seduces us as being unnecessary evils, we need to see them as instruments that God has placed in our lives to refine our character, to prove our faith, and to demonstrate our love and loyalty to Him.

You know, there's the story told about the husband and wife that were driving their car down the road, and as they were, on the sidewalk coming towards them was a beautiful woman—lovely shape, fantastic clothes, beautiful face. And as they went by, they both looked at the woman, and after they passed, the wife turned to her husband and said, "When you look at a woman like that, are you attracted to her and do you have desire for her?" And he said to his wife, "When I see someone like that, it just gives me the opportunity to choose you all over again."

And you know, this is why God puts temptations and trials in front of us—because it gives us an opportunity to choose Him all over again. You remember what Jesus said to Peter? Will you also go away? And Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we know and are sure that you are the Christ, the Son of God.

And you know, as Babylon comes to us with its seductions, and as Babylon comes to us with its persecutions, and by them both puts enormous pressure on us to turn away from Christ, to be disloyal to Christ, and to begin to have intercourse with the gods of this world, we have an opportunity to say, No. I am engaged to another, I am betrothed to another, I am committed to another. He has gone to a far country for a while, but He is coming back. And when He comes back, He will find me to have been faithful to Him, and not to have gone out after another.

And how many supposed Christians do you know who make a profession of faith, persevere in it for a year or two, and then the temptations of the world, or the persecutions of the world become so great that they just go right back to the world, and they throw away their commitment to Christ? They will not receive a wedding garment in that day.

So God is not aiming to make us comfortable in this life, or to make this life easy on us. Instead, God is providing us with endless opportunities to choose Christ over and over and over again, when the world calls upon us to choose another to worship and to follow.

An engaged man or woman remains true to their fiancé, no matter how many others try to flirt with them and seduce them, and this is what we must do with Christ. Never forsake Him for another. And if you are faithful to Him, when the wedding day comes, you will be welcomed into the wedding feast as one who is worthy of the one who was betrothed to you so long ago, and you will be welcomed into His everlasting home to live with Him forever.

So what the book of Revelation is saying to us is, Yes, I know all about the spiritual battles you're facing. God says, I've described them in all of these chapters. Here is why this takes place, and here is what you shall have if you remain faithful in confessing Christ and maintaining your testimony of Christ throughout all of your life. Do not commit fornication with Babylon. Do not go after the gods of this world. Stay true to Christ, and when He returns, you will be glad you did, and He will receive you into His everlasting dwellings.

May the vision of this cause us to spit upon the temptations of the world to go after the gods that it proffers to us, which are so cheap and tawdry and useless, and which shall all wind up in a smoking heap of the ruin of Babylon, never to be heard from again. Why would we go after a god like that? It would be the essence of foolishness. Well let us pray together.

Our Father, we thank you so much for this blessed book and the spiritual reality it brings home to our consciences, and of the necessity to be faithful and bold in proclaiming, Christ is my husband. I will not go after another.

Thank you, Father, for the Lord Jesus, that He has gone to prepare a place for us. And if He has gone away, He will come again to receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. So may our hearts be neither troubled nor afraid at the fierce storm of temptation and persecution that we endure now. May we persevere and remain faithful to Christ, and hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, and thus find Christ owning us as His own betrothed bride. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.