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## THE REVELATION OF JESUS' FEASTS

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### Part 10 of Revelation

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Revelation 19:1-10 | November 23, 2003

We're in the book of Revelation. We've been gathering steam, looking at this issue of the doctrine of worship. And as we've gone through Revelation, there are basically two types of scenes. There are scenes on the earth. Most of them are brutal, talk about sin and judgment and death and mayhem.

And then there's scenes up in Heaven, which are glory and worship and joy and adoration and praise to God. And so today, you've got two different scenes. We're really dealing with two scenes here. One is on the earth, and it is bloody. And one is in the heavens, and it is glorious.

And in each of these two scenes, there are three elements. One, there is a portrait of Jesus, and then there are the response of his people or his enemies, depending upon who's in relationship with him. And then lastly, there is a feast. Everything ends with a feast.

And so, it fits really nicely for the Thanksgiving theme. And we will be today reversing the order. We'll start in Revelation 19:11, and we'll look at the earthly scene first, and then we'll go to the front end of the chapter and we'll look at the heavenly scenes second.

Beginning in Chapter 19, verse 11, here's the first scene, this is the scene that begins in Heaven and then comes to the earth. Revelation 19:11 says, "I saw Heaven standing open" – that's John, who is the author of this book – "and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True." This is Jesus. It's the portrait of Jesus as a warrior.

Okay, if any of you watched Gladiator or Brave Heart, or you went and saw Master and Commander and were encouraged deeply in your heart by God, as I was, you'll love this image of Jesus. Jesus sometimes is portrayed as sort of a limp-wristed guy wearing lavender tights, with sort of nicely feathered hair and a daisy behind his ear, sipping organic tea – that's not caffeinated, of course.

(Laughter)

But what you're gonna see here is a different picture of Jesus. Here, Jesus comes with a tattoo to open a can –

(Laughter)

And the glorious truth is that how you see Jesus really determines everything else in your whole world. If you see Jesus as this mighty warrior and King, you'll respect him. You'll follow him. You'll have a great deal of honor and dignity for him.

If you see him as basically an extra in a Richard Simmons exercise video, you will not be able to worship him as your God and give him the glory and be filled with enthusiasm, as you, indeed, should.

And so, here he is on a white horse. It's good right from the beginning. A white horse. His name is Faithful and True. I love this verse, "With justice he judges and makes war." Now, some of you have been told, as well, that Jesus is a pacifist. That Jesus would never hurt anyone.

Well, we are in a season, now, where God is being gracious and patient and kind and tender. He's inviting people to repent. He's inviting them to stop sinning. He's inviting them to trust in him. He's very patient. He's very loving. He's very kind.

But there comes a day when he's done. That he just takes sin and sinners, and he judges them, and then he makes war against them. Now, most of you – you think about it – if I told you – I'm not that big. I'm getting old, a bit lazy, but if I just told you individually, I'm going to make war on you – just me. For some of you, that would scare you. For others, it would humor you. But for some, it would scare you.

(Laughter)

Jesus here says, "If you don't repent, I will make war on you." That's terrifying. My son, Zac, always says that he loves Jesus, 'cause Jesus is the toughest. That's true. The other night my son, Zac, got some weird, demonic dream, and he felt like he got physically attacked.

The next morning he said, "Satan attacked me." I said, "What did you do." He said, "I prayed to Jesus." And I said, "Well, what did you say?" "I said, 'Jesus, crush him.'"

(Laughter)

My son's four. I said, "How did it go?" He said, "It left, and I went back to sleep. That's why I didn't need you, daddy." I said, "Well, next time, you

can come and get your daddy. Your daddy'll take care of it." He said, "I talked to Jesus. He took care of it. He's tougher than you are anyways, right dad?"

(Laughter)

"Yes, he is. That's true." Good theology. My son's a great theologian. "Crush him." Good prayer.

(Laughter)

And Jesus is a King, and he's a warrior, and he has authority and power. And you either repent and come to him as a friend, or you don't, and then he comes at you as an enemy to make war. To make war.

It goes on, "His eyes are like blazing fire," – he's not happy. Right? When your dad would get this look, you would empty your colon and run for your life, with no idea where you were going. You just get – that's the look. Just that blazing fire coming out of his eyes, judging sin and sinners – "and on his head are many crowns."

He is the King of Kings. "He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God." Now, I grew up down in SeaTac, behind the strip club. In my neighborhood, you had to be fairly tough just to survive. And occasionally, you would know that someone had it out for you, and they were going to come and make war against you. That was the kind of neighborhood I grew up in.

I was the oldest of five kids. So, you always have to protect your siblings. So, like in my car, I'll confess, I usually carried a bat, 'cause you never know when you're gonna need one to play baseball, or to defend yourself. Bats have multiple functions in my neighborhood.

And when you would know that someone was going to fight you, or someone had it out for you, and there was always these goofy thugs in our neighborhood who did, you would protect yourself. You would defend yourself. Right?

Here, Jesus goes off to war wearing what? A robe. No cup, no helmet, no shield, nothing. What does that tell you about Jesus? He goes to declare war on what? The earth – everyone on the earth. All nations of the earth, all the soldiers, all the armies, all the sin, all the sinners – everyone. Billions of people.

What does he come wearing? Cotton. That should tell you something about Jesus. He's not intimidated by us. He's not threatened by us. He's not pushed around by us. And if he decides he's going to crush us, we can nuclear arm ourselves; we can get guns; we can get soldiers; we can get tanks; we can get bullets; we can get guns, and he comes in cotton. And he crushes us all.

And his robe is dipped in blood. That tells you that he's already indicating what's going to happen once he comes. And for some of you, you have this picture of Jesus, that he's just this really nice sky fairy, who's up in Heaven, and if you pray, it's like a piñata, and things just come to you. It doesn't matter what you call God, or what you think of God, or if you obey God, or if you care about – just God is just up there, this big mush in the sky. And that as long as you're kind of spiritual, everything will be fine. And it's not that way. It's truly not that way.

That we've sinned against a holy and good God, that there is justice. There is judgment. There is consequence. God is patient and loving and kind, but there comes a day when he just gets sick of us all, and he gets off his throne, and he comes to do something about it. And when he does, we can't defend ourselves against him, because we're guilty as charged. And we can't defeat him, because he is God, and we are not.

So, he comes wearing his robe dipped in blood to declare war on the nations of the earth. No defense mechanisms whatsoever. No protection at all. "The armies of Heaven" – verse 14 – "were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean." That's very unusual for an army. Armies usually don't wear white. I've never seen an army – I've never seen a victorious army wear white, I'll say that. Maybe an army has worn white.

But you go into battle, you don't come in nice, pressed linen. These are like guys going out for dinner with their fiancée – white shirts, clean, beautiful, glorious, well-pressed. Why don't they wear camouflage? Why don't they wear fatigues? Why don't they dress up in a color that won't show blood and mud and dirt?

The answer is simple – because Jesus is going to win so thoroughly, that you could show up in a newly pressed white shirt and not even worry about getting it wrinkled or dirty. And we think we're so tough. Every nation thinks it's so strong, thinks it's so invincible. You know, terrorism now has us a little bit on edge, because all of a sudden, there's this perception that there's a degree of vulnerability.

Well, there's a continual degree of vulnerability, that we're frail human beings, and that we can't protect ourselves from one another, let alone from God who made us, should he decide to declare war on us.

It goes on to talk about what's going to happen at the end. And this is the end of history. "Out of his mouth comes a" – verse 15 – "sharp sword with which to strike down the nations." Then he quotes the Psalms, "'He will rule them with an iron scepter.'" Jesus is portrayed as wearing a robe dipped in blood, no defensive armament whatsoever, riding a white horse. His name is Faithful and True. And with him are his army of godly men dressed in white. That as he comes, he comes to slay the nations of the earth, and he does so with a sword that proceeds from his mouth.

It's my son's favorite image of the Bible. It's my son's favorite image. I told him today, "While I'm gone at church, draw a picture." I bet you ten to one

when I get home for lunch, he'll have a picture of Jesus on a horse with a sword coming from his mouth. There's a reason why little boys love dragon slayers. It's because they're image bearers of God.

There's a reason why little boys loves to go watch sword fighting in *The Lord of the Rings* – because they're image bearers of God. There are reasons why boys love to protect the innocent and to harm and undo evil-doers. It's because they're image bearers of God.

It's very important, particularly for you men, to see Jesus in this way. I want you to see, it's not the men that are doing this. It's not men that are lawless anarchists that just pick up swords and go into the street to slaughter people. It's God who does that. You and I, in the meantime, should be sending out the Gospel, loving people, doing all that we can to invite other people to come to faith in Christ, and then in the end, it's Jesus who avenges himself. He doesn't really need our help.

But for you men, and for you boys, you need to see Jesus in this way. In his three-year incarnation on the earth, the Lord Jesus was a humble, simple, Galilean peasant. He was humiliated. He was scorned. He was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. He was mocked. He was stripped. He was beaten. And he bled to death on a Roman cross – humiliation, suffering, and agony.

If that, however, is the only picture that you have of the Lord Jesus Christ, it will greatly diminish your manhood. It will greatly diminish your confidence. It will greatly diminish your courage. You will be a man who wilts and is humbled and humiliated in the wrong ways.

You need to see Jesus, particularly you men, in his victory, in his conquest, in his strength, in his resurrection, in his exaltation, in his second coming, not just his first. But there are times, most certainly when men need to lay down their lives. There are times, most certainly, when we need to be humbled, and we need to suffer because of love for someone else.

There are also times when we must be strong, and we must be confident, and we must be courageous, and we see that in Jesus. These two great portraits of Christ. And my thinking is this, that that humble Galilean peasant gets about 99 percent of the press. But if you saw Jesus today, you wouldn't see him in that way.

You would see him wearing a robe dipped in blood. You would see him with crowns on his head. You would see him riding a white horse. You would see him in unveiled glory, triumphant and true, and you would see him with a sword protruding from his mouth to declare war against his enemies. That's what you would see today.

When John saw into the heavens, that's what he saw. I want you to see Jesus as he is. This should encourage your prayer life. When you make a request, you're not making a request to the limp-wristed sky fairy in lavender tights. You're making a request to Jesus.

When you go to tell someone about the goodness of God and the power of God to change a life, you're not talking about this humble Galilean peasant any longer. You're talking about someone who has risen in conquest over sin and death, and now has the power to rule all nations of the earth, and can transform anyone and do anything.

And this portrait of Jesus is so tremendously important for some of you who struggle with sin. Sin is truly not your problem. Your problem, probably, is your image of Jesus. If you saw him as he truly was, and as he truly is, you would deal with him more soberly, and you would be more intent in obedience.

But if we reduce Jesus to something that he is not, someone that he is less than, then it changes the way that we live. We don't fear him, respect him, obey him, or follow him, because we're not that impressed. In fact, we think we're one of those people who could crush him, as Judas Iscariot and the Roman soldiers did at the foot of the cross. But not when he comes again. Those days are over.

The sword comes from his mouth. The sword is the great weapon of choice throughout the Scriptures for war. A gun is so distant and impersonal. And a bomb, you don't even get to see your enemy in the eye. For someone to slay you with a sword, they must get close and they must run you through, and they must look you right in the eye to do so.

Jesus comes with a sword from his mouth. You've sinned against a good, holy, and righteous God, and his justice is very, very personal. It goes on to talk a little bit more about this great event where Jesus comes back. It tells us, then, at the end of verse 15 that, "He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God" – that's a revisitation back to Chapter 14, verses 19 and 20, where Jesus comes with a sickle, with a sword, and he slays evil-doers and he throws them into this great winepress. And there he stomps them underfoot, and their blood flows as high as the bit in a horses mouth for some 180 to 200 miles. It's a sea of blood.

Jesus destroys evil and evil-doers. And some of you will struggle with that. You say, "How could a loving God do justice to sinful people?" Well, the issue is that God cannot tolerate sin and sinners forever. That God deals with sin. And the problem is that he has to deal with us, because the sin is in us. It's not like sin is out there and we're not participating in it or causing it. So, he has to deal with us.

And he begs and pleads, and he gives opportunity for repentance, and then those who do not, all there is left for them is justice, and their blood flows, and it flows strong out of the winepress of his wrath. This is also where the hem of his garment, this robe that he is wearing, is covered in blood, because he is trampling underfoot his enemies.

"On his robe" – it tells us, verse 16, this is probably my favorite verse in the whole section – "On his robe and on his thigh, he has written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." I just – you gotta see him. Jesus Christ in glory. Eyes blazing with fire. Crown on his head – not a crown of thorns any longer. His robe dipped in blood. No defensive armament whatsoever, sword out of his mouth, tattoo down his leg: KING OF KINGS AND

LORD OF LORDS. Coming to judge the nations and make war.

This is not the Jesus they're talking about on Oprah. You got that, right? This is a totally different guy. You ever seen a picture of Jesus hanging up in a church or a Sunday school, or maybe in a Christian bookstore like this? Bloody robe, sword out of his mouth, furious, tattoo down his leg that says KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

If you can draw – draw that. Send it to us. We'll put it somewhere. Thomas Kincaid won't pick it up, but it's biblical, and it's good.

(Laughter)

Very important. This is a God, quite frankly, I can worship. This is a God who isn't intimidated by me. This isn't a God who needs me. This isn't a God who's lost all power and authority and control. This isn't a God who's intimidated and staying up all night shaking and self-medicating and crying and going to a therapist because everyone disobeys him and gives him the finger.

This is a God who actually has control of himself and human history and everyone and everything that he has made. And he comes with utter confidence. He's not weeping; he's not crying; he's not distraught. He's upset, and he's going to deal with sin and sinners. I love it. Honestly, for me, as I've gone through this book, this has transformed my whole understanding of Jesus.

I've always wondered – you know, I love Jesus. I appreciate that he suffered, he died, he rose. I'm glad that he shed his blood. But what good is he if he's not victorious? What good is he if he can't deal with Satan? What good is he if he can't conquer sin and death? What good is he if he can't be in charge of the whole creation? What good is he?

He's nice. He's humble. He's kind. He's great. He's winsome. He's a great teacher. I appreciate all that. What we need is a king. That's what we need. We don't need someone to inspire us to do good things. We need someone to lead us into that place.

And this issue of Jesus as King – I love that. And Lord over all. That's the God you can worship. That's the God you can trust. That's the God that you can stick with. And when you sin, that's the God that you should fear.

It goes on, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried out in a loud voice to all the birds" – here's Thanksgiving feast, verse 17 – "flying in midair, 'Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.'"

Usually, this week, this is the way that it works, we eat birds.

(Laughter)

Something very curious happens at the end of human history. The tables flip and the birds eat us. Everything changes. And God sends out this invitation, "I am going to slay people who don't love and worship me. All you birds that I have made, come, gather." You ever seen vultures gather overhead? You ever seen birds swarm together, waiting to prey and to feast? That's what Jesus invites them to. Not just the death of his enemies – the destruction of his enemies. Not just the destruction of his enemies – the humiliation of his enemies.

Again, this is a God I can worship. Some of you say, "Well, I thought everybody goes to Heaven." No. No, narrow is the path. Very few. Some of you say, "Well, I thought I was going to Heaven." I don't know. If you don't worship this God, you're his enemy. Sin is a declaration of war, and he is coming.

And I was thinking about it this week. I truly look forward to this day. I was talking to my wife. She thinks I'm a little sick; you can judge for yourself. What I told her was, I said, "Sweetheart, I will be so pissed if I get to Heaven and the same stupid stuff that happens here happens there. I will be so sorely disappointed if I spend 60 years preaching the Gospel, loving my wife, raising my kids, teaching the Bible, leading this church, tithing my money, working 80 to 100 hours a week, and telling people to trust in God and obey him, if I die, wake up in Heaven, and we get ripped off, and our kids get molested, and somebody rapes you. I will be pissed."

There's a sense of justice in me that says, "I understand patience, but not forever. I understand that people sin and God is patient, but I long for the day when it comes to an end. Not just the sins that people commit against me, but also the sins I commit."

I'm, quite frankly, at the point where I'm kind of sick of repenting. I would like to just be glorified and in the presence of Jesus and not have to continue to repent of being a wicked sinner and saying the word "pissed" and stuff like that.

(Laughter)

You know, I long for the day when there's no more sin and there's no more sinners. When there's no more sin in me. I'm not hurting anyone. No one's hurting me. There's love and joy and life and goodness and gladness. For those of you who think, "Well, everybody should go to Heaven, God shouldn't deal with anybody like this," – really?

I told you last week, you think about it. You're a hypocrite if you have a door on your house. If you think God should let everyone into his house, then you should let everyone into your house. The reason you have a door and a lock and a dog and a cop and a gun and a cop and 911 on speed dial is because though you're a hypocrite, you're still fairly sharp.

(Laughter)

You know that not everyone is good, and you don't want to hang out with everyone. I don't want the same stupid stuff to be on the news in Heaven that's in the news here. I don't wanna pick up the paper – another war, another terrorist, more people die, someone else got sick, the obituaries are full, 40 percent of kids don't have a dad. I don't – I'm sick and tired of looking at it.

And it's because I am imperfect that I get frustrated so quickly. Jesus is perfect. His wick burns longer, but it still burns. And if you can't see him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who brings justice and makes an end and starts over, new Heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem, then you have to ask yourself, what better plan is there? What other hope is there? Either you have to believe that this life is all we have, and then you die without hope, or that everyone gets into Heaven and that Heaven is just like this forever. Which, quite frankly, is not a great sales pitch for me.

So, the birds get invited to the great Thanksgiving feast on the enemies of God. Here's how it goes, "Then I saw the beast" – verse 19. Throughout here, Jesus is called the Lamb, Satan is called the beast. Great imagery – "and the kings of the earth" – all the nations rise up. At this point, the only thing they can agree on is that they don't like Jesus.

It's interesting. It happened the first time Jesus came, too, in Acts 4. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews all agreed on one thing – Jesus needed to die. It's basically the only thing the Greeks, Romans, and Jews ever agreed on. When Jesus comes back, the only thing that all the nations of the earth will agree on is that he shouldn't be the king. He shouldn't be the Lord. That they don't want anyone over them. And so they will band together, and they will make war against God.

I'll read it again, verse 19, "Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured," – doesn't even get to make war. I like that – "and with him the false prophet" – you know there's false prophets in the world?

Some of you right now are thinking, "Well, this sounds terrible. I've heard another preacher say that everybody goes to Heaven. I've heard another preacher say that Jesus never would judge anyone. I heard another preacher say that all people that are religious and spiritual and sincere are in right relation with God. I've heard another preacher say that sin is out there, not in here, that we're the solution, not the problem.

"I heard another preacher say that Jesus is a total coward and a pacifist, and that he would never do anything like this." And I'll tell you, there's false prophets. Here's how you can tell a false prophet, here's the key – you like what they say.

(Laughter)

That's it. That's what the Old Testament says. False prophets prophesy lies, and people like it that way. Most of the prophets lived in obscurity, lived in exile. They were kicked out of God's peoples' community and relationship. And ultimately, what would happen to them? They were killed. Why? People apparently didn't like what they said. Just like Jesus, our great prophet. He came, spoke the truth, they killed him.

I'm not saying that just because I offend you, I'm biblical.

(Laughter)

But it's something to think about.

(Laughter)

I stand in a long line of people who tell you things you don't want to hear, and you don't like to hear. But just because we don't like something doesn't mean that it's not true. False prophets will tell you whatever you want to hear. You give them money. This is the way it works. It's reciprocity. It's corrupt religion.

They sort of take the pulse, "Okay, winds blowing south, I'm preaching south. I preach south, you guys pay me money, we'll have this mutual relationship where I make you happy, you make me rich. Is that a deal? "I gotta book deal, television show, radio show. I got more degrees than Fahrenheit. I gotta lot of letters after my name." That's what false prophets do.

A real prophet says, "You are the problem, not the solution. You need to repent and trust in God." That's what a real prophet says. A real prophet lifts up God and reduces us. A false prophet lifts up us and reduces God.

Here there are false prophets who are trying to protect their spiritual claim. They have their pseudo-churches, their religious centers, their spiritual whatever-you-might-believe, their book deal. All of a sudden, Jesus comes, and he makes war against them.

Some of you will intentionally seek out false prophets. You will buy books until you find an expert who tells you what you want to hear. You will go to a counselor and another counselor and another counselor, and the first three love God and told you the truth, and then the last one didn't, so that's the one you stick with.

And some of you choose radio stations and you choose friends and you choose television stations because they tell you what you want to hear, which may not be what you need to hear. And you will tell yourself, "Well, I need not listen to that real prophet because they're being mean to me."

No, they're being honest with you, which means they're the only one that actually loves you, because they care more about your relationship with God

than your impression of them. I love you guys with all my heart. I'm giving you my whole life. I'm here for 50 years, 'til I die. Every Sunday I get up and I swing for the fence, and I give you everything I got.

And I would just warn you, there are other prophets in this city. There are other people who preach the Bible. There most certainly are. I'm not the only one. But always place yourself under someone who tells it like it is from the Scriptures, and lifts up Jesus, and does not lift up you, so that you don't end up on the wrong team, seeing the sword coming at your head. It's tremendously important.

Jesus says that when fully taught, everyone becomes like their teacher. If you follow a false prophet, you'll be a false believer. Jesus makes war against these guys. I look forward to the day, when all of the nut jobs and the weirdos and the bizarre religions – have you even just driven around our city and looked at some of the organizations that are spiritual? Good glory.

You know, I got so frustrated this week. A bunch of pastors got together; they commissioned a huge study, wasted enormous amounts of money making a huge declaration on gas mileage. They can't agree on who God is – you know, secondary matters – but primary issues like gas mileage. You know, the primary themes of Scripture, like gas mileage – the reason why Jesus Christ came to the earth, SUVs, they are so unified on that.

I just – I just – I turn green. I stop speaking in full sentences.

(Laughter)

I got four times my normal size – I just lost my mind.

(Laughter)

God came to earth, died, rose, and the big idea is gas mileage. That's the point. I just go, "That is the stupidest thing." I drive a truck and an SUV, and I'll get bad gas mileage on my way to Heaven.

(Laughter)

But at least I know where I'm going. You know? And we live in a day when spirituality is about gas mileage, it's about all kinds of things. It's not about God. False prophets talk about everything but God. And they say things that are pleasant and pleasing, and inoffensive.

People love that. They pay them good money. Real prophets get up, and they say, "Here's God. Here's sin. Here's you. Here's the real issue. Don't get sidetracked with all the secondary matters. Drive down the middle of the road, stick to primary issues. What about you and God?"

And Jesus comes, and he waylays these guys, and he makes an end to 'em. He just says, "Enough all ready. That's enough." I look forward to the day when I'm out of a job, Jesus is the only one preaching, and there aren't any false prophets.

"But the beast was captured," – verse 20 – "and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf." Some of you say, "Well, I know this other religion, and they do miracles," or, "I know this other teacher, and he healed somebody," or, "I heard about this other prophet, and he had miraculous powers."

Thessalonians says that Satan performs counterfeit signs, wonders, and miracles to even attempt to deceive the elect, if that were possible. Just because someone has spiritual power doesn't mean it's from God. Some of you watch those goofy psychic shows on TV. Whether it's a fraud or it's real, the question is, if it is real, what spirit empowers the understanding? What spirit empowers the supernatural ability? If it's not Jesus, it's a demon. And if it's a demon, it's not good.

We live in a day where if you have spiritual ability, supernatural power, everyone assumes you're for God. Not necessarily. Here, it's false miracles. People are getting healed. Maybe people are getting risen from dead. Maybe this guy walks on water. I don't know. It's something pretty astonishing.

Even because someone has power and authority that is supernatural in nature, that is not indicative that they belong to God. Some of you think that all religions and all religious leaders and all religious teachers are all working for the same God, whatever they call he/she/it/they/we – whatever they call that God.

Some of you think as long as they have supernatural ability, they must all be getting it from the same God. No, there's darkness and light. And you can plug in to either, and you can have power. And if you don't plug into Christ, and you're not operating under his power, you're his enemy, and he brings an end to you.

You've gotta be very careful that you just don't want miracles and power, but that you want Jesus. 'Cause if you seek signs and wonders instead of God, you may get them from Satan. It's very important.

"With these signs, he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive" – love that – "into the fiery lake of burning sulfur." That's brimstone. This is ancient road tar – stinks and hot, buried up to your neck, terrible.

You say, "Well, that's terrible God would do that." Really? For false teachers who encourage people to worship Satan; for people who perform counterfeit signs, wonders, and miracles, so that people would worship demons instead of God? This is all that is left – alive, thrown into torment and punishment – an end to it.

"The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse," – that's Jesus – "and all the birds gorged themselves

on their flesh.” Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

I tell you what, maybe I was just meditating on it a little longer than you this week. Maybe it’s the first time you’ve thought about it. If this doesn’t sound like good news, you need to read it until it does. You need to read it until it sounds like good news. No more liars, no more lies; no more false religions, false philosophers, no more false belief systems, no more worship of Satan, no more following of demons. That sounds good. I vote, “Yes.” That sounds wonderful.

Well, what happens? Well, Jesus takes care of ‘em. Jesus takes care of everything. That’s the beauty. See, in our human systems of justice, the innocent would get punished some. Some of the guilty would go free. We would mess this up. Not with Jesus – perfect justice. He knows everything; he knows everyone. He’ll deal with it perfectly.

This is the great scene on the earth – Jesus, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, tattoo down his leg, robe in blood, crown on his head, sword coming out of his mouth, waging war. The enemies of God don’t even repent. They try and fight him. They get crushed, and there’s a feast at the end.

The same thing happens at the beginning of 19, except for it is a completely different portrait of Jesus. A different group of people responding to him, and a different kind of feast altogether.

Chapter 19, verse 1, go to the beginning of the chapter, “After this, I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in Heaven, shouting: ‘Hallelujah!’” You Pentecostals, you liked that, didn’t you?

(Laughter)

That is – this the first time in the book that this word shows up, “hallelujah,” and it shows up one, two, three, four times right here. It means, “praise God.” Previously, we’ve seen “amen” a lot, which means, “I agree, so be it.” Here, it’s “hallelujah,” which means, “praise God.”

And they scream out, “Hallelujah!” God’s people who are in Heaven, when they see an end to sin and an end to sinners and an end to the worship of demons and false gods and false religions and false miracles, they see Jesus finally make everything right, they say, “Praise God, finally.”

A cry from Chapter 6, verse 10, “How long,” is finally answered. “Now.” No more patience, just justice. And they say, “Praise God.” “Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,” – isn’t that great? Salvation doesn’t belong to us. Glory doesn’t belong to us. Power doesn’t belong to us. It belongs to God.

And he saves and empowers and restores the goodness and the glory of people, and they say, “Praise God.” They go on to worship him. This is a song that they sing, “for true and just are his judgments.” Can you say that about anything else? Have you ever seen a court system? Have you ever seen a political operation, a nation, a judicial or a legislative, or an executive branch that could say, “We are true and just”?

There is no such thing because sinners run the earth. We can’t say that. Here, true and just. Doesn’t matter how much you can afford for an attorney, you’re still gonna get the right verdict. And the people of God say, “Praise God. Praise God that Jesus rules and reigns, that he has salvation and glory and power, that he judges and he judges justly, and he judges truthfully. Praise God.”

See, we are in a world that is almost anarchist. It’s ready to almost give up on law altogether because it’s imperfect. Here, it will be perfect. He has condemned the great prostitute” – it’s interesting, Jesus is the Lamb, Satan is a beast. Jesus has a bride, Satan has a whore. You gotta love the imagery in here. Beasts and Lambs and whores and brides and warriors and husbands.

The prostitute here is false religion. The difference between a wife and a whore – pretty simple. A wife does things out of love and relationship; a whore does them for money. Sometimes they do the same thing. And some people look at it and say, “Well, what’s the difference between a wife and a whore?”

Well, the difference between a wife and a whore is this: A husband is in relationship with his wife. He loves and adores her. He takes her out to a nice dinner, and he makes the Song of Solomon sing again, to God’s glory and his joy. What the beast does, he has this other religious organization that he works with, it’s a whore.

And the whore and the beast do some of the same things that the bride and the groom do, but it’s for totally different reasons. The whore’s just doing it for the money. The whore’s not doing it for love. The whore’s not doing it for worship. The whore’s not doing it for goodness or beauty, truth. The whore’s just doing it for the money.

You need to know this. There is a lot of religion on the earth that’s just whorish. It’s just all about the money. Some of you are totally turned off by the whorishness of some religions. It’s just money, money, money – all you want is our money. You know what? The bride of Christ, the Church, is supposed to give money to the groom – but not for the same reasons that the beast gives money to his whore.

It’s a completely different motivation. It’s a completely different relationship. We know that some of you are so turned off that that’s why we don’t pass the plate during the offering. If you’re not a Christian, do not give. Do not give. It’s not about the money. If you’re a Christian, you’re part of the bride, yes. The bride does things in relationship with the groom, out of love and devotion, and out of the covenant and the intimacy.

My wife and I give money to this church, but our money is not the same kind of money that is transacted between the beast and his whore. It’s just not. And some of you have allowed this to so corrupt your understanding that you won’t give any money. Well, the answer is not to stop acting like a

whore. The answer is to start acting like the bride. It's not what's done as much as why it's done, and the context of the relationship that it happens in.

It's sad, isn't it, that the beast has a whore. In this city, the whore is much bigger than the bride. Much bigger than the bride. You could say, "Well, they do the same things as the bride. They meet. They talk. They sing. Yeah, the whore does a lot of the same things that the bride does, but the whore and the bride are totally different.

We want you guys to be the bride. We want you ladies to be the bride. We don't want you to be the whore. We don't want you to have this corrupt, defiled, sickened, hypocritical religion that just goes through the motions of a bride, but lacks all the heart for the groom, and therefore does it on behalf of the beast.

And when the bride sees that Jesus comes with a sword and that he slaughters the whore, no more false religion, they say, "Praise God. Praise God." You know what a loving, faithful, devoted, godly, kind bride despises the most? The whores. The whores. The women with the plunging necklines and high skirts, who after a few drinks completely transform into someone that they were not created to be.

The brides despise the whores, because it is the whore that seeks to undermine the whole concept of covenant and relationship that the bride has with her groom. And when you and I, as the bride of Christ, see the spiritual harlotry come to an end, we will say, "Praise God."

It's just people who love Jesus and are in relationship with him and follow him and submit to him and respect him and enjoy him. And we don't have any of these whores running around, trying to interfere with the covenant. Trying to mess up the spiritual relationship. Trying to lead God's people astray. Trying to get all the people from the bride to start running around and acting like whores. And you and I will say, "Praise God." Praise God when it's all brides and no whores. I totally lost my place.

(Laughter)

That was so good, I was just in it – now I'm totally lost. Where in the world was I?

Response: Verse 3.

Verse 3, I better hurry, or otherwise we'll be doing communion breakfast. Verse 4, "The twenty-four" – oh, "They shouted: 'Hallelujah!' The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." Continual punishment. It doesn't end. How many of you ladies, if your husband had a wandering eye, you realize that woman is gone – good. Oh, she moved back, uh-oh.

What happens here, the whore is put away forever. No more worries, no more sin, no more problem. "The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne." The throne shows up again. It's the center, the preeminence.

That's what we'll do in Heaven. When God destroys evil-doers, when he destroys sin and sinners, when he gets rid of all the stupid military armament that people try and use to make themselves King of Kings and Lord of Lords, when he gets rid of the whore, when he gets rid of all the false religion and the false prophets and the false miracles, and he just completely cleanses the earth of all of its stains, you know what we're gonna do? We're gonna take a deep breath; we're gonna fall down, and we're gonna thank God.

That's what you and I are gonna do if we love Jesus. Praise God, it's over. No more working around sin. No more putting up with it, tolerating it, reading about it, seeing it, no more. It's just done. And it's done forever.

And they cried, "Amen and hallelujah!" You guys are so dull.

(Laughter)

It's just this wonder bread, just sort of – golly. I'm sick, and I have the flu, I get no love. Verse 5 –

(Laughter)

"Then a voice came from the throne, saying: 'Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!'" Everybody who does respect God, everybody who does obey God, everybody who does confess their sin to God. You praise him. Why? Because this beast and her whore, they certainly won't. And these false teachers and false miracle workers, they certainly won't.

But you and I, we get this great invitation, we get to praise God. And when you come here, I'm gonna tell you, "Worship God," but I don't want you to hear it like this, "You have to praise God." I want you to hear it like this, "You get to praise God. You're part of the bride. You have a groom. He loves you. He's coming again for you. He will make everything new and good and right, and you get to praise him. You don't have to, you get to."

No bride on her wedding day says, "I have to get dressed up. I have to come down the aisle. I have to look him in the eye. I have to get my picture taken."

(Laughter)

She says, "I get to, and since I was a year-and-a-half, I've been planning this event with great detail."

(Laughter)

She's looking forward to it. There's an expectation. And when finally she hears, "Kiss your groom," – ho! Yes! You never say, "Now you have to kiss your groom." That's just terrible theology. Good theology is you get to kiss your groom.

And when the bride meets the groom, Jesus Christ – when the Church sees Jesus at his second coming, he will not appear like this victorious, triumphant warrior who has slain all of his enemies, covered in blood. He will come as a groom. You'll see him, and he'll come as a Lamb.

This is the other picture of Jesus – loving, faithful, kind, devoted, patient, forgiving, glorious, wonderful – the image of a groom. This is a great imagery for the men. Men, you need to have the capacity to be a warrior and a groom. With your bride, you are a groom. With enemies, you're a warrior. And some men confuse that, and they're a warrior with their bride, or they're towards and they are a groom with their enemies.

You need to be both, like the Lord Jesus Christ. I can't wait to be there with you. It says, "Praise God." We're gonna get to do that. We're gonna get to thank God for all that he is and all that he's done.

And it says, "you who fear him, both small and great!" Little kids and big kids. Some of you are in this church service, and you're not that old – you're kids. You, too, praise God. You, too, belong to God. You, too, will be there before the throne. You, too, will be singing. You, too, will be glorifying and honoring God.

We have a concept of adolescence in our culture that is stupid and unbiblical. It says that you get to act like a child until who knows how long.

The fact of the matter is, that David even said in a young age that God had made him wiser than all of his counselors. You can be a little kid that loves God, serves God, and makes it to the throne and gets to cry out in triumph and victory as part of the bride of Christ.

That's why in this church we do not have child care on Sunday morning for kids over the age of 10. We don't. We believe as soon as your children are able, go to church, be part of the bride, worship Jesus, small and great. And if the kids are fidgety, or they gotta color, or whatever, that's okay. Small and great will be before the throne. Small and great should be here with us.

So for all you kids, welcome to Mars Hill, it's good to have you. It's really good to have you, small and great. My son asked me this a few weeks ago, on the 144,000 great men, I was studying it with my 2-year-old and my 4-year-old, and my 4-year-old son, Zac, said, "Will there be boys in the 144,000 of the greatest men?" I said, "Why?" He said, "I plan on being there, dad."

(Laughter)

I said, "Good, you should." Your goal should be to stand there with the men of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Not as a little kid pursuing sin and folly and screwing around. Your goal should be, even if you're a little man, you're still a man. If you're a little lady, you're still a lady.

"Then I heard what sounded" – verse 6 – "like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters, like loud peals of thunder, shouting:" – this is all of Heaven crying forth, angels, everything – "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns." No more elections. No more kings. No more votes. No more taxes. Just Jesus.

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding supper of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)" The bride of Christ, the Church collectively, not individually – you need to get this.

In our theology, so many of us are, "I have a wonderful, personal relationship with Jesus." Well, you're also part of the bride of Christ. You're part of the Church. You're part of the people of God. If you go it alone, you won't go long. You are part of a whole people that have been harvested together and brought together as the family of God. You need each other, and we need you.

And that here, the bride gets herself ready. Have you ever seen a woman on her wedding day? Every woman looks hot on her wedding day.

(Laughter)

It is amazing. You see a woman come out in that white dress – it's just like a kind of glory envelops her. It's just – boom, there she is, wonderful. She wears white. Why do Christian brides wear white? Because that's what the Church wears at the wedding supper of the Lamb. That's where we get that. It's not tradition or folklore, it's biblical.

You and I, as the people of God, in the end, there will be a great wedding. The other feast is where the birds eat the people.

(Laughter)

You don't want to be at that party. This is a much better party. At this party, Jesus comes back. His bride is all prepared, looking good. I have done a multitude of weddings, and there is nothing better than seeing the bride come down the aisle, and her groom take her hand, to love her, for them to look into one another's eyes, and to pledge covenant. It is the most beautiful thing.

Some of you cry at every wedding. Some of you are single, and you cry really hard.

(Laughter)

And I love that moment. I just love that moment. You and I will have that moment with the Lord Jesus Christ. It says in I Corinthians that we shall see

him face to face. We shall know him as we are fully known. That as the bride of Christ, all of our longings would be fulfilled. We will see Jesus, our groom, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, ruling and reigning, bringing an end to sin and sinners, just our eternal relationship with him, with God's people.

And for some of you guys, you'll struggle with this. You have a really hard time seeing yourself in a white dress. You have a hard time seeing me in a white dress. Praise God, you should.

(Laughter)

But again, here, the imagery is corporate. That in the same way that a wife is to respect her husband, that a husband is to lead his wife, that a husband is to love his wife and die for his wife and sacrifice for his wife, so in that way, that's how our relationship with Jesus is typified.

The reason why our relationship with Jesus is oftentimes so screwed up in the Church is because our marriages are so screwed up. If a wife doesn't respect her husband, she doesn't understand Jesus. If she doesn't follow her husband, she doesn't understand Jesus. If she isn't eagerly anticipating standing with the Lord Jesus, then she doesn't understand why she should sit next to her husband on the couch.

And men who don't understand marriage, they really confuse their wives on the Gospel, because if they don't love those women, those women don't understand the Gospel. And if they don't lead those women, and if they don't adore those women, and if they don't sometimes save those women, even from their selves, then they're confusing the portrait of the Gospel, 'cause it's all about a bride and a groom.

That's why Paul says in Ephesians 5, "Husbands, be like Jesus. Ladies, be like the Church." Our culture says, "We'll have none of that." Well, great. Be the whore, but that's how the bride works. And that's how the groom is. And you and I will be there.

~~Some of you will do it through dispensations, through months, through promises.~~

There's one way you can break it down – through meals. I'll break down history for you in meals.

First meal, Adam and Eve eat without God – sin enters the world. Exodus, Passover happens. Blood is put over the doorpost to the believers' homes. The Passover meal then becomes the Jewish tradition, showing that you need the blood of Christ to be passed over from the wrath of God. Jewish people continue to celebrate Passover.

The Lord Jesus comes. He's tempted to partake of a meal after 40 days of fasting. Satan comes, says, "Say to these stones, 'Become bread.'" Satan says, "Eat a meal with me, Jesus. Eat a meal with me. Just like Adam did." Jesus says, "Away from me. Away from me."

Much of Jesus' ministry is spent eating meals with people – sinful people. The religious leaders called him a drunkard, a glutton, and a friend of sinners in Matthew 11. They said, "He goes to too many parties and he has dinner with the wrong kinds of people." Jesus says, "I didn't come to seek and save those who are healthy. I came to seek and save those who are lost and need a physician."

A lot of Jesus' life is spent around meals. He sits down with his disciples at the last supper, and he eats, and there it is Judas who betrays him. Judas took the offer to dine with Satan, not with Jesus. Jesus is betrayed; he is crucified. He rises from death, and what does he do? He has breakfast with his buddies. It's another meal.

Every Sunday we get together and we celebrate communion. You know what we are doing? We're showing you human history through eating and drinking through a meal. You either eat with God, or without God. You either eat with Satan or with Jesus. That's why as Christians we pray over our meals, that we're eating with Jesus. We're always eating with Jesus. And that communion is, for us, the remembrance of his body and blood shed for our sins. That's why we repent of our sins before we partake of communion. We remember Jesus.

And he promises that he's coming again. Revelation 19, this is the great meal. Human history is a sprint toward a wedding and a feast. How great is that? You and I, wearing white. The Lord Jesus takes us. He says that he has gone before us to prepare a place for us. He has set the table. He's been working on it 2,000 years. This should be a tremendous party.

The angels will be there. All of creation will be there. Sin and sinners will be no more. You and I will get to eat with God. We'll be sitting there with John and Paul and Luther and Calvin. It's gonna be great. I hope Bono leads worship. It'll be wonderful.

(Laughter)

I can't wait to get there. It tells us in Isaiah that we will have the finest of meats and the choicest aged wines. Hallelujah!

(Laughter)

It's a big Adkins get together. It's glorious.

(Laughter)

Red wine, red meat, the Lord Jesus Christ, and my brothers and sisters. That sounds great, wonderful. Good wine. Can you imagine what kind of wine God makes? Some of you say, "Well, I don't drink." Well, don't get drunk, but someday, you should have a sip. It will be great wine.

And meat. Some of you say, "I'm a vegetarian." You won't be.

(Laughter)

When you're fully redeemed.

(Laughter)

[Applause]

When you're fully redeemed and you're glorified and your sanctification has reached your shopping cart, you will –

(Laughter)

You'll eat meat. Good meat. The choicest of meat. Some think that's terrible. "I won't kill innocent animals." Well, you'll slaughter innocent vegetables, hypocrite.

(Laughter)

You will eat meat and you will drink wine. And you will be with friends and you will be with Jesus. That's where history is going. A great feast. Why is it that even people who don't know God get together for feasts and parties? Because we're image bearers of God and we know, "You know what? I was made for more than just work and bill paying and lawn mowing. I was built for feasting with friends. There's something in me that needs that."

Every culture needs feasting with family and friends. That's what we're gonna do this week. Because we're image bearers of God, and there's something in us that longs for this great feast at the end.

Now, here's where I will close. "Then the angel said to me, 'Write:'" – he wrote this down for us – "'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

Mars Hill, today you are blessed. You are blessed because you have been invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb. You have been invited to sit at the table with the Lord Jesus and to eat with him, and to be the bride, not the whore – to be with the groom, not the beast – to be handed the fork, and not the sword.

You are blessed that God in Christ today sends out his invitation to you. He says, "Repent of your sins, trust in me as your God. I will love you and save you and forgive you, and you can be with me today, and you can be with me in the end." Blessed are you, Mars Hill. Blessed are you.

Blessed am I. One of the most frustrating things that I have in this job is there are so many great people. When the Church was small, I used to be able to have everybody over for dinner and get to know everybody and be close with everybody and enjoy everybody, 'cause everybody's got great stories and interesting lives. And the church is so big, it's hard sometimes to even see your friends.

Blessed are you who are invited to this great feast. All your friends in Christ will be there. All your brothers and sisters in Christ will be there. And there will be no rush. We can catch up. We can visit. We can enjoy one another, and we can enjoy God who made us. We can eat, we can sing, and we can laugh, and we can dance. And there will be little kids, and there will be old people. And the whole family of God will be together for this great party.

If you have a picture of Heaven that is anything less or other than this, change it. This is Heaven. "At this, I fell down at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship,'" – Mars Hill – "'Worship God!'" Worship God. Worship God.

You say, "I want to go to the wedding supper of the Lamb." Worship God. The wedding supper of the Lamb is a worship feast. It's a worship event. And it's only fitting that worshipers would be there. So worship God. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Today I'm going to say, "Blessed are you who respond to the Lord Jesus." Give your sins to him, he will forgive you. Partake of communion. When you do, eat with Jesus as part of the bride. Don't eat with the beast as part of the whore.

I'm going to invite you today, then, to do as he says, to worship God – to sing and praise him, to adore him, to enjoy him. To give of your tithes and offerings – not for the reasons that the whore does. Her transaction business with God, but for the same reason that the bride shares all that she has with her groom, because they, in fact, have become one.

And I will encourage you to sing and to celebrate the goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as you eat and feast this week, I want you to be thinking, "This is all foreshadowing of the Kingdom, and blessed am I, because I've been invited."