

Introduction: *Personal example:* Trial of case—waiting for verdict—Have I done well?—“The jury has reached its verdict”—nothing more you can do—then judgment comes. *Other examples:* election; student’s examination; marriage proposal.

In all of those cases, you get the results back within a short period of time. The jury might be out for a few hours; the election results are generally known the same day; the girl will usually say “yes” or “no” on the spot; you’ll get your exam grade back in a day or two.

Sometimes the results may take longer. Raising children for example. You think you do a good job. They start out OK, but then they have a way of growing up, making their own decisions, and living their own lives. And then parents often blame themselves for the way their kids are living later on. Have you ever seen the movie “Trouble With The Curve”? It’s an excellent film starring Clint Eastwood, Amy Adams, and Justin Timberlake. It’s part baseball, part love story, and part father-daughter reconciliation.

As we all know, the perceptions of the parents may be completely different from the perceptions of the kids. Things happen that one person isn’t aware of and can make a big difference in relationships. In the movie, as in real life, it may take decades to sort things out. Final judgment isn’t rendered when the kids turn 18.

Last week we talked about **Rev 6**—the presence of evil and suffering and what is important to God. As we saw last week, God *will* judge those who do evil and will avenge and reward those who are his.

Today’s passage, Rev 19:11-21, tells us the end of the story. **Rev 19** tells us about the verdict and judgment that are coming. We don’t know when, but the end is coming. And we need to keep this passage in front of us particularly as we go about our lives and see all the evil that is in the world, because this passage is both a warning and an encouragement—and the stakes involved are infinitely higher than any lawsuit, or election, or examination, or marriage, or even the raising of our children. This passage describes Jesus’ verdict on the world & the judgment he is going to render.

Organizational Sentence: Today we are going to look at this passage in 3 ways: first, examine the details and symbols; second, observe the principles that are being taught; third, emphasize the applications for our lives.

Context of Revelation:

1. **Genre:** “Genre” means the literary form. Revelation actually is a combination of 3 genres: letter; prophecy; and it’s apocalyptic (i.e., a form of prophecy that uses symbolic language). The fact that it is a letter means that it was written to be understood by the audience to which it was written. It is not some kind of “secret code.” So we can understand its essential meaning.
2. **Purposes of prophecy:** Biblical prophecy basically consists of what are called oracles of judgment and oracles of salvation. Oracles of judgment = “If you keep following the path you are on, judgment is coming.” Oracles of salvation = “It’s not too late! If you turn from the path you are on to the Lord and his ways, He is loving and forgiving, and blessings will come.”
3. **Historical context:** Roman Empire (AD 90-95). Similar to the US:
 - *Organization*—large capital; other important cities; large rural/agricultural areas; connected by roads & good transportation system.
 - *Language*—one major language (Greek = English) + other languages.
 - *Social*—multiple tribes/peoples; multiple religions.
 - *Militarily*—Rome had the most powerful army in the world; soldiers spread around the known world; frequent conflicts.

I. Retelling the Passage:

A. READ Rev 9:11-21

B. 19:11-21—Explanation of the major symbols:

All of the symbols used in **Rev 19** are found elsewhere in Revelation or elsewhere in the Bible, or were common things known by the people of the Roman Empire when the book was written. As I said earlier, the book was written to be understood by its audience, and that includes the symbols.

1. **v. 11**—*White horse* = conquering hero—like victorious Roman general parading in Rome. And as we saw last week, in the book of Revelation “white” also connotes purity, righteousness, and holiness.
2. **v. 12**—*Eyes are flames of fire* = Jesus is all-seeing. His eyes see not just the outside of things but burn down t the heart of the matter. Fire = judgment. The same symbol of Jesus having eyes like flames of fire was used at the beginning of the book in **Rev 1:14; 2:18**. Jesus is the all-seeing, holy and

righteous judge. His judgments pierce to the inner core of things. As **Rev 2:23** says, “*All the churches will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts.*”

3. **v. 12**—*Many diadems* = crowns/royalty; “many” = more than any earthly king. Thus, **v. 16** says that Jesus is “*King of kings, and Lord of lords*”—not just one among many.

4. **v. 13**—*Named WOG* = Jesus (**John 1:1**--QUOTE).

5. **v. 14**—*Armies wearing fine linen, white & clean* = Christians/the church (**Rev 19:8**—QUOTE). As we saw last week, these white garments probably indicate not only the righteous acts of the saints but also their reward of vindication for their having faithfully persevered despite persecution. We see that vindication here, because now the saints are no longer being persecuted but they constitute the very armies of heaven who are coming to destroy the persecutors and evildoers!

6. **v. 15**—*Sharp sword*. This same image was used in **Rev 1:16** which says of Jesus, “*Out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword.*” **Heb 4:12** gives us further insight, since it says, “*the WOG is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*” See how these images build on and complement each other? Just as his eyes as flames of fire shows how Jesus sees and his judgment goes to the heart of things, so the sharp sword—the WOG—conveys the same idea.

Note also: Just as God created in the beginning of history by the word (“*and God said let there be light, and there was light*”), so he will judge and destroy at the end by the word. We see that in **v.21** (QUOTE).

The standard of God’s judgment is the WOG, because the standard of our lives is the WOG. Nothing that happens at the end should come as a surprise to us, because God has laid it all out for us in advance—both in his written Word and by the WOG coming to earth in person, the person of Jesus.

7. **v. 15**—*Rod of iron* = Jesus has complete authority & power; all enemies will be totally destroyed. Both of those ideas—complete authority and total destruction—were found at the beginning of the book, in **Rev 2:27**, which used the same imagery (QUOTE).

8. **v. 17**—*Great supper of God* = counterpart to **Rev 19:9** (*marriage supper of the Lamb*). The reference in **vv. 17-18, 21** of the birds eating the flesh of all those who oppose Christ is drawn primarily from **Ezek 39**. It represents the application of an ancient curse formula in which one’s enemies were denied a proper burial but their bodies were left to be eaten by the birds. This image implies the total destruction and even humiliation of an enemy, even after death.

What this whole passage is telling us is that, in the end, God’s vindication and triumph of his people, and the destruction and humiliation of his enemies, will be so total and complete and perfect, that there will be no unresolved issues, no doubts, and everything that happened in this life will be so fully summed up that we will all be left in awe.

One other thing: The link between the “*marriage supper of the Lamb*” (**v.8**) and the “*great supper of God*” (**v.17**) tells us that the counterpart to *salvation* is *judgment*. Remember: just as biblical prophecy consisted basically of oracles of judgment and oracles of salvation, that is exactly how the prophecy is *fulfilled* at the end of history, either judgment or salvation. There is no middle ground.

II. Principles:

A. *There will be a day of final reckoning; it will affect the entire world and every person in it.* (vv. 11-21)

History is not an endless cycle of reincarnation. Rather, history is linear. It has meaning. We do not know when the final verdict and judgment will be rendered. It is more like raising children than taking an exam. Everything we do in this life is contributing to that final verdict. History *is* moving to a termination point in which everything will be summed up, the books will be balanced, and all wrongs will be righted.

B. *Jesus is coming back to this earth; he will not come as the “meek and mild,” but as “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords” to “judge and wage war.”* (v. 11-12, 16) It is Jesus, not Buddah, not Muhammad, not any idol, not the Star Wars “force” or anything else. Jesus is Lord over all. He is not the wimpy Jesus often portrayed in movies. Even at the beginning of the book of Revelation, as we see here at the end, Jesus is portrayed as so different from the way we normally think of him. **READ Rev 1:14-16.** That’s the Jesus who is coming again.

C. *His judgment will be absolutely accurate, faithful, true, and righteous.* (v.11)

1. It will be all-searching, thorough and go to the absolute root and heart of matters. (**v.12**)
2. It will be final. (**vv.11, 20-21**)
3. The standard for judgment is the Word of God. (**vv.13, 15**)

D. For those who are not his, Jesus' coming and the judgment he brings will be fearful beyond belief. (vv.13, 15, 17-21)

1. Jesus not only judges but wages war. (v.11) You don't want to make war against him because he has all authority in the universe.

2. Doom will be final and horrible—there will be no “2nd Chance.” (vv.15, 17-21)

E. For those who are his, it will be triumphant. (v.14)

Faith, trust, and commitment to Jesus will be fully vindicated. (vv.11, 14)

So what is this passage telling us? It is telling us:

Proposition: Be committed to Jesus now so you don't fall under his judgment later.

III. Applications:

A. If Jesus is not the Lord of your life, repent and turn to him.

As we mentioned last week, one reason God delays to right the wrongs now is to give people time and reason to repent and turn to him.

1. If you are doing well: You think all is well. But life is slipping away. As they used to say at the beginning of “The Days Of Our Lives”: “Like sand through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives.” You know what is inside of you; you know that you cannot change yourself from the inside-out, but you are going to have to stand one day in front of a perfect and holy God who is going to demand a level of perfection that you cannot give. What will you do then?

2. If you are poor and not doing well: The God of the universe knows you have tremendous value. How do we know that? We know because the God of the universe came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, lived as a poor man, and died for you to give you new life.

3. Man's religion = what we do for ourselves; the Gospel = what Christ has done for us. Jesus lived the life we should have lived. He died the death we should have died, and he paid the price for our sin that otherwise we would have to pay, but can't. He gives us the holiness, the righteousness, the perfection that God demands but that we can't provide on our own. All we have to do is turn to him. Receive Jesus as the Lord of your life, and live! Why is this so important?

- The Resurrection demonstrates *who* Jesus is and that he is alive today.
- He said that he would be coming back to the earth. (**Matt 24; Mark 13**).
- Today's passage tells us what will happen when he does return. Are you ready?

B. If Jesus is the Lord of your life, stay faithful to him.

Revelation talks a lot about the rewards promised to those who “overcome”—IOW, those who remain faithful despite hardship.

How are we faithful?—LOVE: **Matt 22:36-40; 1 Tim 1:5.**

1. What does love look like:

- **Gal 6:10** tells us, “*While we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*” The early church put Jesus first, and it affected their attitude toward their money and stuff. Although everyone owned things, like we do, they did not consider their property as solely belonging to themselves, but knew that Jesus was the ultimate owner. Consequently, whenever they saw someone in need they willingly shared what they had. As a result, **Acts 4** tells us that “*there was not a needy person among them*” and God recognized that and “*abundant grace was upon them all.*”
- God pours out his grace on those who live like him and for him. God was confirming in the lives of those early believers that because they were committed to Jesus *then*, they would not fall under God's judgment later, but in fact would be blessed later and were even being blessed right then! The same will be true for us.
- **Matt 10:42** tells us that even if all you have is a “*cup of cold water*” but give it to a needy person because you love Jesus, Jesus see that; he will remember that and at the judgment will reward you for that; and his rewards last forever. Nothing is wasted, and everything we do in this life has a meaning and significance that will not be fully apparent until Christ comes again.
- Everyone in this room has opportunities all around us to live out our faith through loving acts of service to others. Just yesterday a friend of ours told us about her cousin who is going through some hard times—in part, I think, because of some of the bad choices he has made. He needed food. My good wife didn't say, “*His own folly has brought this on him. This is a good lesson. Maybe now he'll change.*” No. She took some food to our friend to give to the guy.

- Look at it like this: All such acts of love = sewing together our “*white robes*” (**Rev. 19:8**). Since the white robes are the righteous acts of the saints, with every act in the name of Jesus that demonstrates his love and his character, we are stitching together and adding to the garments we will be clothed in for all eternity. Don’t be found naked in the day of judgment, but be beautifully arrayed. We create our righteous garments through what we do now.
2. Remember:
- Our problems now are nothing compared to what will happen to those who do not belong to Jesus when he comes.
 - Our problems now are nothing compared to the great good that will be ours when Jesus comes if we live faithfully to him now.

Conclusion: “Verdict” is from 2 Latin words which mean “to speak the truth.” Jesus both speaks the truth and execute judgment based on the truth. **Be committed to Jesus *now* so you don’t fall under his judgment later.** As we demonstrate our commitment to Jesus now through our acts of love, we will be doing more than just avoiding judgment. We will be storing up blessing and rewards. And those rewards will begin now as God works in us and through us. We can’t see everything that is going on behind the scenes. But we know how the story ends. And since we know that the story has great cosmic meaning, that means that everything we do now has far more significance than we can see now. So stay committed, live faithfully, and in due course we will reap an eternity of blessing.