

# Babylon's Funeral and the Lamb's Wedding

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[ 0 : 00 ] Would you take your copy of God's Word and as we're able to remain standing, let's read from Revelation 19 as we prepare to hear this passage preached.

! Revelation 19, we'll be reading the first ten verses together. This is the Word of God. After this, I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven crying out, Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

For His judgments are true and just. For He has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of His servants.

Once more they cried out, Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever. And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God who was seated on the throne, saying, Amen! Hallelujah!

And from the throne came a voice saying, Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, small and great. Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out, Hallelujah!

[ 1 : 19 ] For the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory. For the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure.

For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, Write this, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Then I fell down at His feet to worship Him. But he said to me, You must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. I have been asked before whether I would rather preach at a funeral or at a wedding.

And my answer often surprises people. Now, if you ask me which one I would rather attend, hands down, I'd rather go to a wedding. But believe it or not, I would rather preach at a funeral than at a wedding.

[ 2 : 28 ] Why? Well, let's be honest. At a wedding, people aren't paying that much attention to the preacher. It's all about the happy couple. But at a funeral, people are far more prone to hear the preacher.

They want to know what he has to say. They want him to provide a word of encouragement, a word of hope. Now, I'm probably exaggerating a bit here. But at a wedding, I feel somewhat like a placeholder.

Well, as strange as it may seem, here in Revelation 19, we have both a funeral and a wedding. It's clearly a time of celebration.

The marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. Yet a large part of the celebration here is because the great prostitute Babylon is now dead.

We see smoke rising up from her remains, which causes the 24 elders and the four living creatures to shout, Amen, Hallelujah.

[ 3 : 32 ] So this is both a funeral and a wedding. But there's not the slightest hint of sorrow or grief. This is a scene of pure joy because anyone with reason to mourn at this point is no longer in the picture.

You see, this particular scene marks a transition from the harlot of Babylon in chapter 18 to the bride of Christ here in chapter 19.

It moves us from the destruction of carnality and evil to the celebration of the righteous saints in heaven. Now, if I were to imagine Revelation 18 and 19 as a movie, chapter 18 would be like

coming to the dramatic climax when the tension is at its greatest.

The earth is made bright with the glory of an angel just before the city of Babylon, with all of her wickedness, is plagued with death and mourning and famine and then burned up with fire.

Those who gained wealth from her, they're standing far off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud. They stand helpless as they watch the smoke rise from this once great city.

[ 4 : 54 ] They cry out, in a single hour, she has been laid waste. And as we watch the scene unfold, there's a tremendous amount of noise.

People are screaming. City walls are collapsing. But then a mighty angel takes up the city and throws it into the sea. And as it sinks, all goes quiet.

There's not a sound to be heard. All we see, maybe on the screen, are some faint ripples on the surface of the water. A moment later, however, we begin to hear a faint, muffled roar in the distance.

The camera slowly pans upward and moves through the clouds until we reach heaven. And suddenly, we see a great multitude of people. And they're singing.

They're shouting, Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. For his judgments are true and just. For he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.

[ 6 : 03 ] Hallelujah! They cry. Hallelujah! Well, that's the scene unfolding in this part of Revelation. Revelation. And we need to watch this scene play out before we attempt to examine its various parts and pieces.

It's been said that Revelation is a picture book, not a puzzle book. We need to absorb the drama of it. We need to see the story. The details, they can be studied.

They can be better understood, of course. But the story itself really comes first. That's the nature of this type of biblical literature. It's more like a movie than a textbook.

With that in mind, let's work our way through this passage here in Revelation 19. After this, that is, after the fall of Babylon, John heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude in heaven. According to Revelation 7, this is a great multitude that no one can number. From every nation, from every tribe, from every people, from every language.

[ 7 : 11 ] People from all walks of life are represented here. Though that thought perplexed the Lord's first disciples, God's redemptive power reached far beyond the borders of Israel.

The gospel found a home in every nation, tribe, people group, and language around the world. And for all time. Now, I've known people to be confounded by Revelation's description of a great multitude in heaven.

They think, how can there be a great multitude in heaven when the Bible otherwise suggests that God's people, His redeemed people, are relatively few in numbers. For example, Jesus said, For the gate is wide, and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Which is it? Are God's people few?

Or a great multitude? Well, the correct answer is both. Simultaneously. At this very minute, I don't know whether all of these numbers are accurate, but there are something like 7.8 billion people, nearly 8 billion people living on the planet.

[ 8 : 27 ] According to one study I read, Protestant Christians make up almost 600 million of the global population. So, let's just assume all 600 million are genuine Christians, and we're not even considering everyone who has lived in the past, and everyone who will live in the future.

600 million is a lot of people. 600 million certainly constitutes a great multitude. Yet, 600 million is not even 8% of the world's population.

In other words, believers can be a relative minority in this world, but simultaneously, a multitude in heaven. Amen. Regardless, there is a great multitude in heaven, and when John sees them following the collapse of Babylon, they are shouting, Hallelujah!

And I love that word. It's one of the most universal words in all the world. It's a word that is so special that our English Bibles here don't even bother to translate it.

They just transliterate it, which means they just bring it right over from the original Hebrew, and so do many other languages. That's what makes it so universal. And what does it mean? Hallel means praise.

[ 9 : 43 ] Yah is short for Yahweh, the proper name of God. Hallelujah then means praise Yahweh. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Interestingly enough, as universal as this word is, Revelation 19 is the only place in the New Testament where you will find it.

And here it is used four times. It's used only 24 times in the Old Testament. And every appearance is in the Psalms.

In fact, the last Psalm ends with this word, Hallelujah! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. So what we really have here in Revelation 19 is yet another Hallel Psalm, if you will.

A song of praise to the Lord. It's Psalm 151. But there's something that may strike us as unusual about this particular song of praise.

It praises God, of course. But it praises God specifically for his judgment of the great prostitute Babylon. Hallelujah!

[ 10 : 53 ] For he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality. Hallelujah! The smoke goes up from her forever and ever.

Now we may not sing about God's final judgment too often. But it is a perfectly legitimate reason to praise God. To be clear, we don't praise him because we relish the prospect of the destruction of sinners.

Even God has said, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He would rather the wicked turn from his way and live. But if the sinner refuses, justice will be accomplished.

And the punishment will be appropriate. Sinners will be judged right along with Babylon to whom they gave their allegiance. So while we are more likely to praise God for his mercy and his grace as we should, it's no less appropriate to praise him for his justice.

Listen again to this song. Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. For his judgments are true and just.

[ 12 : 12 ] For he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants. Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.

So notice all of the reasons the saints in heaven give for praising God. We've already discussed the first, which is that justice will prevail. That's a good thing.

Second, there is salvation. You see, salvation cannot be accomplished apart from the destruction of wickedness. Think of the flood in Noah's day.

Peter says eight persons were brought safely through the water. Now, some translations are even clearer than that. They say Noah and his family were saved through or by the floodwaters.

In other words, they were not saved from the water by the ark. That's not what Peter says. Instead, they were saved by the water. From what were they saved?

[ 13 : 18 ] Well, the book of Genesis says, The Lord saw, this is prior to the flood, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

So the flood saved Noah and his family from the rampant evil that prevailed in the world during that time. God saved them by essentially eliminating the evil.

By wiping it off the face of the earth. He physically and forcibly removed evil from this earth. Now, not altogether, of course, there was still evil in their hearts.

But you understand what I mean. And that's a sample of what he'll do again at the end of time. He will take every last bit of wickedness and he will destroy it once and for all.

Hallelujah. Praise God. The older I get, the more I find myself meditating on a passage in Romans 8.

[ 14 : 20 ] It's where the Apostle Paul writes, For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory that is to be revealed to us.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

I don't know about you, but I can relate to this kind of groaning that Paul describes. Even on the best days of my life, I still get tired.

I stub my toe. I get a headache. I catch a cold. The kids are crying. I lose my keys. I'm late to work. When my family and I finally have that opportunity to take a nice vacation and just get away from it all, of course I get sunburned on the first day of the trip and it makes the rest of it kind of miserable. [15:51] And on and on it goes. You can relate to this, right? The best of days can't be perfect. And making matters worse, I quietly observe the world around me.

I read the reports of my brothers and sisters in Christ and other parts of the world who are suffering greatly. I read the headlines coming out of my own nation. Injustice, war, corruption, murder, neighbors, fighting against neighbors.

I long to be free from this world in its present condition. I long to be free from tyranny and corruption and profanity and violence and persecution and injustice and materialism and unthankfulness and godlessness, sorrow, suffering, death.

I long to be free from my own struggles with sin. I groan inwardly, anxiously anticipating the day when God will bring a complete end to all of it.

He will save us from it, not for a season, but for all eternity. Amen. Babylon will fall because God will judge the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality.

[17:05] and the saints, they will shout hallelujah. Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. We will be free from it as we watch the smoke rise up from the harlot forever and ever.

In other words, we will never forget what God has saved us from. Now the third reason that the great multitude in heaven praises God is for his glory and his power.

Now in the Hebrew mind, glory conveyed the idea that there is a weightiness to God. The matter of God is really no small thing.

Sadly, however, those who are seduced by Babylon, God is a light matter that we can simply neglect or disregard altogether without any consequences.

They say his power is irrelevant if he has any power at all. The truth is, there is coming a day when every knee will bow to God and every tongue will confess it.

[18:14] The entire world will see his glory. They will recognize his undeniable weightiness and they will behold his power. And when that day comes, the saints will shout with joy, Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God. You'll notice though that the saints aren't the only ones shouting for joy here. The 24 elders and the four living creatures, they fell down and worshiped God who was seated on the throne saying, Amen!

Hallelujah! Even the angelic beings in heaven shout praises to God, affirming his works as truth to be celebrated. Then from the throne itself comes a voice saying, Praise to our God, all, or praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.

Every God-fearing believer, servants of the Most High, are called upon here to worship God, turn away from Babylon, and worship the one true God.

Because in this moment, that's all that's left. Now, if you're still troubled at the thought of celebrating the destruction of wickedness, and of course that consequently means the destruction of the wicked, I encourage you to turn your eyes to the God of your salvation.

[19:42] See his glory. See his power. Aren't his judgments true and just? Doesn't the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality deserve the fate she deserved?

Hasn't God finally avenged on her the blood of his servants? She was an unrelenting temptress with a mission to draw away the saints from God in which she could not entice them to sin.

What did she do? She simply killed them. She persecuted them. Praise be to God. Our Lord has saved us from her. Just look over there.

The smoke goes up from her forever and ever. She is finished once and for all. She can never do what she's been doing all of these years ever again.

Now as we come to verse 6, the Dolby surround sound becomes very apparent here. The noise level gets much higher as John hears what seems to be the voice of a great multitude like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out.

[20:56] So the camera shifts its focus. The harlot of Babylon gets a little blurrier as the bride of Christ gets a little clearer. In other words, we've come to a transition in the text.

The song of praise continues, but the heavenly vision of the future shifts its focus from the destruction of Babylon to the wedding of Christ and his bride.

That is the church. So we're leaving the funeral behind and we're going to join the wedding now. And the multitude in heaven cries out, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure. glory. Now, to be clear, there was never a time when God was not reigning as Almighty Lord. But this is a moment when the entire world sees it.

[ 22 : 02 ] Today, according to Psalm 2, the nations rage and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord. But when we reach this moment described in Revelation 19, even those nations and those rulers who once worked against God and His people, they are stopped.

According to Psalm 2, He who sits in the heavens laughs at their vain attempts to plot against Him. And again, the church shouts, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns.

Make no mistake, no one is higher. No one is more powerful than our God. You know, I can't help but to think of all of the ways that our world tries to create utopias on earth.

People are constantly striving to build these perfect societies, but they always fail. Every single time. More often than not, their efforts end with government oppression and moral chaos.

Go back and read Romans 1 for example. Babylon thinks she has all the answers. She thinks that she can give mankind hope, but there's something fundamental missing in her designs for this perfect world.

[ 23 : 26 ] Namely, she denies God. She rebels against God. And a perfect kingdom cannot exist without God. A perfect kingdom cannot exist without man's subjection to God as Lord, as King, as ruler.

And furthermore, a perfect kingdom cannot exist as long as sin still exists. All of that, however, that's behind us at this point in the timeline.

There are no more nations to rage or to take counsel together against the Lord. No one is attempting to build a perfect world on faulty premises because as Paul says to the Corinthians, when the perfect comes, the partial or imperfect will pass away.

Here in Revelation 19, well, this is perfect. And the saints shout, let us rejoice and exalt and give God the glory. The saints have waited so long for this moment.

they have suffered so much. They have longed for this day and they have finally reached the consummation of everything that God has been doing from the beginning to redeem his people.

[ 24 : 44 ] God began promising this day shortly after our fall into sin and he continued to prophesy it generation after generation. Eventually, we saw the long-anticipated Messiah.

He came to this earth. we watched his ministry, we heard his teachings and then we witnessed his death followed by his resurrection and then you remember some of the disciples, they stared into the sky as he ascended into heaven.

And then the wait continued. Even as early as the first century, some believers were growing very nervous about this. Where is Christ?

Is he still coming? Have we missed his return? And that's why Peter writes, Do not overlook this one fact that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness. And he goes on to say, The day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

[ 26 : 04 ] Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God?

I pray that for all this time we've waited we have not lost sight of this day, the day of God. I will confess that there are times when I feel overwhelmed by the world around me.

I'm burdened by the sin and the godlessness of popular culture not to mention my own sin.

I'm worried about my children's future in a nation that may very well be experiencing the judgment of God as we speak. I wonder how bad he'll allow things to get and sometimes these thoughts leave me feeling a little anxious maybe a little afraid sometimes even angry.

You know, I want to march in the streets take our country back. I want to see some semblance of righteousness again. I want to, well, make an attempt at creating a utopia on earth, right?

[ 27 : 23 ] But then I look to Christ and he reminds me that I won't be here that long. He reminds me that my children won't be here that long.

He reminds me that I have a very good reason to feel a level of dissatisfaction in a fallen world that has rejected him. He reminds me that he did not die in my place so that I could be satisfied in a fallen world.

Christ has redeemed us for something more, something far greater. Remember what Paul says, for we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only creation, but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, for in this hope we are saved. We don't hope for humanity to finally get its act together and engineer a utopia on earth. We know full well that's not going to happen.

[ 28 : 28 ] No, we hope for the coming Christ who says, behold, I am making all things new. Only Christ can accomplish that perfect world most of us long for in the pit of our stomachs.

We long to see it. Only Christ. Please understand, though, that the focus of this, the latter part of this passage is not really on this perfect world to come.

That much is implied by the celebration in heaven over the destruction of Babylon. But the real focus here, notice, is Christ himself and specifically the church's ultimate union with him.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory. Why? For the marriage of the Lamb has come. Now, the Bible uses a lot of different analogies and illustrations to convey the concept of salvation to us. but there's something about this imagery of a wedding that conveys a deeper level of intimacy than most of the others. To be the bride of the Lamb implies profound intimacy.

[ 29 : 44 ] Can two people be any closer to one another than a husband is with his wife? Let me take you back to John 17 for a moment. In John 17, Jesus prays for his disciples the very night of his arrest.

He'll be crucified the next day. And in this prayer, he defines for us the essence of eternal life. And it may surprise us that he doesn't mention mansions in heaven or streets of gold or anything like that. He doesn't talk about this perfect, sinless, painless existence to come. Instead, he says, Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Full stop. according to Christ himself, the crowning joy of eternal life is to know him and to know the Father.

[ 30 : 58 ] And keep in mind, he's not talking about knowing them with mere head knowledge. This is far more than a mental ascent. This is more than knowing the facts about God or the facts about Jesus.

Even the demons believe, right? And their theology is probably more accurate than ours in some respect. The demons, however, do not enjoy a personal, intimate relationship with God.

When Jesus uses the word know, that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent, he's talking about the kind of deep personal knowledge that a husband has with his wife and vice versa.

He's talking about the kind of union that a husband has with his wife that in the case of a husband and wife ultimately results in a child being conceived. The Old Testament uses this language quite often.

For example, Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain. Adam knew his wife again and she bore a son and called his name Seth.

[ 32 : 03 ] You know, I have always been very perplexed by people who call themselves Christians but have no desire to read the Bible, to hear the word of God preached, or to learn more about Christ.

It's confounding to me. I'll ask, do you want to go to heaven? Of course I do. Well, do you understand that the greatest feature of heaven will be our marriage to Christ?

Okay, sure. Well, why then have you no interest in cultivating that relationship now? Did you not pursue your spouse before you were married?

Did you not want to learn everything about him or her that you possibly could? how can we say we want to be joined to Christ in heaven if we show no interest in joining him now?

Or growing closer to him now? Think of Mary. Think of her desire to know him more. It's what led Jesus to say about her in Luke chapter 10.

[ 33 : 16 ] Mary has chosen the good portion which will not be taken away from her. So while her sister Martha was distracted with much serving, Mary was engaged in the one thing that is necessary for all of us.

She sat at the Lord's feet and she listened to his teaching. She wanted to absorb every word out of his mouth. I don't think it's a stretch to say Mary was in love.

She was devoted. She wanted to know Christ. She adored everything about her Savior. She longed to be with him. She wanted to grow closer to him.

She wanted to learn his likes and his dislikes. What brings him joy and what displeases him. You know, Danae and I were 700 miles apart for the better part of our relationship before we got married.

And I can remember feeling kind of anxious at times. You know, I wanted to be with her. I could hardly wait for that day when we could finally be joined in marriage, much to the grin of my mother-in-law, and go home to be together from that day forward.

[ 34 : 30 ] My mother-in-law's problem was the 700 miles, not necessarily me, by the way. Think of what Paul tells Timothy at the end of his life. He says, I have fought the good fight.

I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have loved his appearing.

Another way to translate that is longed for his appearing. Do we long for the day when we can be perfectly joined to Christ in the most holy matrimony without any of our current hindrances, namely sin?

Do our daily habits, do our behaviors reflect that longing? I pray they do. Well, the saints and angels in heaven say the marriage of the Lamb has come and the bride has made herself ready.

It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright, and pure. The true bride of Christ will make herself ready.

[ 35 : 50 ] Go back and read Matthew 25. The true bride will be ready for the Lord's sudden appearing. If for no other reason, it was granted to her to be ready.

In other words, by his grace and by his purpose, God clothes his church, his people, his believers with fine linen, bright and pure. And that fine linen as defined here is the righteous deeds of the saints.

Now, it would be very easy to preach an entire sermon on that statement alone. Suffice it to say, we do not ultimately clothe ourselves. It is not our righteousness that justifies us.

It is God who grants or gives the fine linen that is the righteous deeds of the saints. He creates in us a clean heart. He puts his spirit within us and he begins working through us to do his will and his good pleasure when we have come to him empty handed in faith.

And the angel said to John, write this, blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. And he said to me, these are the true words of God.

[ 37 : 05 ] And John here, he's so overwhelmed by this entire scene that he falls at the feet of the angel and begins worshipping him. You must not do that, the angel says.

I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. Worship God alone. In other words, praise God for his promises expressed through this incredible passage of the Bible.

In closing, I'd like to make a simple point that has a couple of practical implications for us. I want to remind you that this day described in Revelation 19 has not come yet.

Babylon, with all of her temptations, all of her sufferings, has not fallen. The marriage of the lamb has not come. And I make this point because, first of all, we're not yet celebrating the fall of Babylon.

Instead, we are called to be ambassadors for Christ to those who are currently deceived by Babylon. We are called to draw them out of Babylon's sway, if you will.

[ 38 : 25 ] We are called to implore them on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. I also make this point for the same reason Jesus tells the parable of the ten virgins.

If you remember, five of the virgins in that parable were not ready when the bridegroom came. They weren't watching for him, they weren't gladly anticipating his arrival, so they were left out in the cold when he entered the house.

They stood outside, pounding on the door, Lord, Lord, open to us. And how did he answer? Truly I say to you, I do not know you.

And I've said before and I'll say it again, those are the most terrifying words we could ever hear out of the mouth of Christ. I do not know you. I never knew you.

And then Jesus concludes the parable this way, watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, Paul says, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day and not to me only, but all those who have loved his appearing. [ 39 : 41 ] We may be Christians, but I pray that every part of us is shaped and moved by this sincere longing, not just to be betrothed to Christ, but finally married to him.

I pray our affections for him run very deep, that we want to be with him. I pray we want nothing more in this world than to be with him.

Now that day hasn't come yet, but it will come soon enough. So may we always live in glad anticipation of it. God's love to God.

And if you aren't joined to Christ by faith, don't wait any longer. Get into him just like Noah got into the ark, seek him, pray to him, cry out, Lord, save me for I am a sinner.

He could return at any moment, even this very day. And if you aren't safely resting in Christ, you will share the fate of Babylon. But if you are in Christ, oh, what a day that will be.

[ 40 : 53 ] You will be free from the groanings of this fallen world forevermore. You will be with your Savior. our God, our salvation, our glory, our power, all of it belongs to you alone.

We thank you for the hope set before us the day when Christ will reign openly and we will be with him forever. I pray that you would keep our hearts watchful and our affections fixed always on your son.

Guard us from the pull of this world and help us to live in holiness as those who are preparing for that great day. And Lord, use us as faithful witnesses while time remains.

Draw those who do not know you to yourself that they may rejoice with us on that great day of the Lord. And it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen.