

# Revelation 19.11–16

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## *Faithful and True*

Amington

Sunday 21 June 2020

Revelation: Names of Jesus [7]

## **Judge**

You may notice I am neither Simon Heathfield, nor wearing the same clothes as yesterday... unfortunately at the last minute he has not been able to send us a video. So I'm afraid you have me again, speaking unprepared and early on Sunday morning!

This is one of those parts of the New Testament that busts the image many of us have of gentle Jesus, meek and mild, which owes more to the Victorians than the actual Bible... **He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty** (15).

Many of us don't like to talk about God in this way. We much prefer to present a picture of God as loving and caring – who comes running to meet us (his prodigal children), who searches high and low to find us (his lost sheep).

Of course God is like that – those two examples come from Jesus’ own teaching about who God is. But God is also more than that – crucially, he is the Judge. And that is a Good Thing.

I suspect most of you have seen TV shows with judges... Jess and I particularly like the cookery ones like *MasterChef*, and recently we enjoyed the BBC’s replacement for *Bake Off*, ‘*Britain’s Best Home Cook*’. But there are others, to do with dancing, singing, fitness – the list goes on.

They all have judges, and those judges are qualified, experts in the field, which makes their opinion – and conclusions – valid.

Most of us also have a deep-seated sense of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. We are pretty good at deciding when things are ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ – the problem is, it’s usually oriented onto ourselves. That is, what *we* do is ‘right’, and what *others* do is ‘wrong’ – unless it happens to coincide with what *we* would have done in that situation. We are excellent at spotting ‘wrong’ – *in other people*.

I think this is one of the main reasons we don’t like thinking of Jesus as ‘Judge’. We’d much rather be our *own* judge – so we can give ourselves a favourable ruling. After all, I’m sure I’d win *Strictly Come Dancing*, despite having two left feet – **if I were the judge!**

Thankfully, I am not – I can't stand that show! And, thankfully, I am not the Judge of All either: Jesus is.

His qualifications for the role? Verse 11:

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.

*Revelation 19.11 (NIV)*

Jesus is not 'a bit' faithful, like us: his *name* is Faithful. It's who he *is*, who he always *has been*, and who he always *will be*. He is true to his word, true to his promises – he is reliable, he is... Faithful.

And Jesus is 'True'. There is no such thing as 'true for me' and 'true for you' – Jesus *is* True, Jesus is *the* Truth. We can believe him, we can trust him – he is reliable, he is... True.

I can't think of better qualifications for the Judge of All. Who better to judge between right and wrong, good and evil, than the one who is called True? Who better to bring real (not arbitrary) justice, than the one who is called Faithful?

And, who better to Judge than one who is strong enough to carry out his judgement against evil, opposition to God, and injustice? Do you not want all the wrongs of this world to be righted?

So here we have a picture of Jesus the Judge, bringing justice to all those who oppose God and reject his rule. It is a fearsome image – but also majestic and awesome – remember, this is *God* we're talking about here, not our personal pet.

## **Bridegroom**

Jesus is the Judge – but at the same time he is the bridegroom. Immediately before this scene of judgement and battle, John describes the **wedding supper of the Lamb** (9), with his **bride** (the church) dressed in **fine, bright and clean linen** (7-8) – exactly like **the armies of heaven** (14). Some honeymoon!

But I can't think of better qualifications for a bridegroom than the name Jesus is given here: Faithful and True. To be honest those two words are a pretty good working definition of what it means to love another person day in, day out.

That means we have a choice, to accept Jesus' invitation to his wedding, or to oppose God – and end up on the battlefield with everyone else who has rejected God. One of those ends well for us – the other *really* doesn't.

I know which I would prefer!

But that choice, that decision is not one that we make only once. If Jesus is called Faithful and True, we his followers are to be faithful and true also – every day, in every way.

The decision to follow Jesus and be faithful and true like him, is both a huge, life-changing decision, and dozens of tiny decisions, every day.

Ask yourself this week – how do I make decisions? Do I make them with reference to God, or only to myself?

And know this: even when you make bad decisions, big or small, Jesus knows – he is always True, he knows the truth of our hearts – but he is also Faithful, he will never turn away from those who come to him.

So let's together build and model our lives on the one who is called Faithful and True.