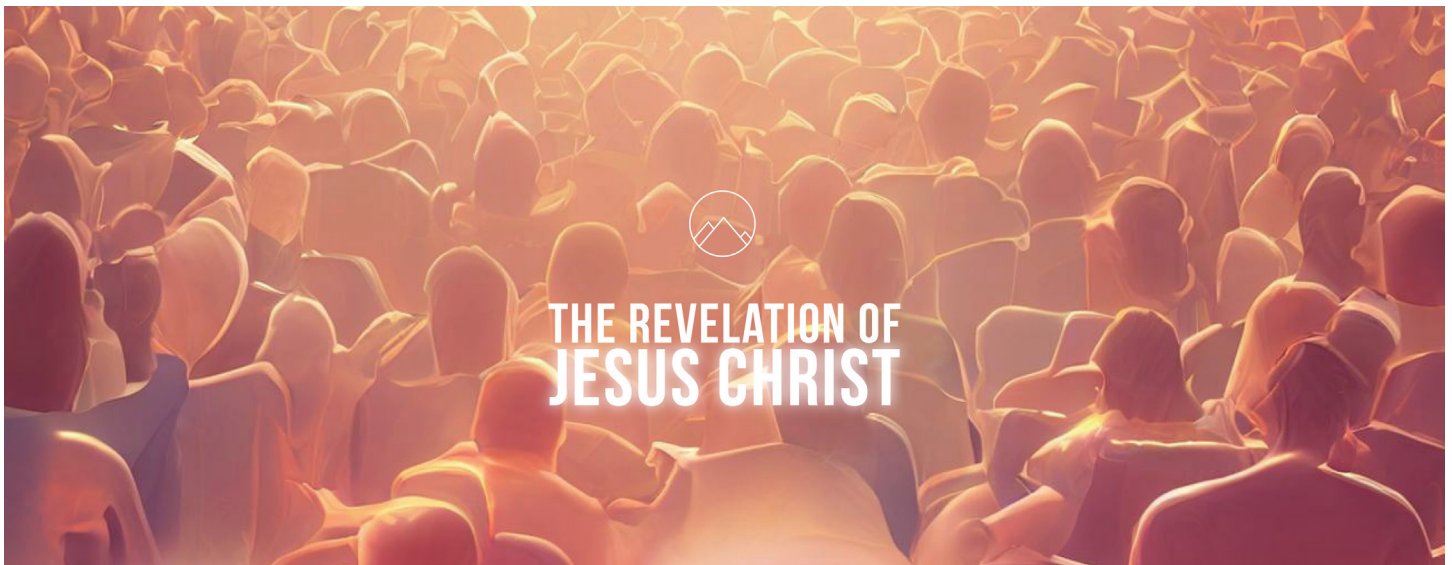




May 5, 2024
Revelation 19:11-21

Revelation 19 is perhaps one of the most significant chapters in the entire book. And as we learned last week, it is a chapter that shows the incredible love that Jesus has for us. Sure, He refers to us as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters and even friends at some point. Which in and of itself is incredibly significant. However, He doesn't stop there and in this chapter, He now refers to us - the Christian church - as His bride. He calls us family. He calls us friend. And now He calls us His own. And so we can see that His love touches every facet imaginable. There is not one facet that is forgotten or missed. He loves us with an immense love that stretches as far as the east is to the west and the north is to the south. Literally encompassing all four corners of the earth - which is why the image of the four living creatures re-appears in this section.

The second half of this chapter is what we will be focusing on today and although it is different, it is equally as powerful as now we see Jesus Christ - the warrior - back in action. We haven't seen Him like this since the beginning of the book, and this time He's riding a white horse and He's coming to take care of business.

Revelation 19:11-21

'Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND

LORD OF LORDS.

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.'

Although not present in this section, the term Hallelujah was a term that was used in the previous section and is a term that now underscores this section. Last week, we learned that the term Hallelujah was used a total of four times, and we learned that these are the only four times this term exists in the entirety of the New Testament. The significance being clear that this term is the highest term for victorious praise and is directed to God and God alone. And so, fresh off the heels of this most ultimate declaration of praise to God, who is victorious, we now see the victorious God in action.

And His name is Faithful and True, with eyes aflame, adorned with many crowns, wearing a robe dipped in blood and a sword coming out of His mouth, make no mistake this is the same Jesus Christ that John witnessed all the way back at the beginning of the vision. The warrior Jesus Christ that always has been, but just has not been revealed until this time. And this time, in addition to the striking image that we read about in Chapter 1, there is an additional detail captured here, that He is riding a white horse. In many first century cultures, the colour white symbolized purity, victory, and triumph. And when a conquering king or military leader rode a white horse into a city, it signified their righteousness, their success, and ultimately their complete authority over their enemies. And so this is now the image of the complete authority and victory of Jesus that is being declared here.

And if you've been paying attention, what's really interesting is the juxtaposition that is happening here as the last time we saw Jesus riding a beast of burden, it wasn't a horse as many of His disciples had expected but rather it was a donkey. On Palm Sunday, just a matter of days before going to the cross Jesus entered into Jerusalem riding on a donkey - declaring peace but also kingship. For this one simple act was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9-10 (please show both verses on screen) that said, 'Behold your king...riding on a donkey...who will bring peace to the nations.....and dominion over the earth.'

Now, it is common for us to look at the picture of Jesus on the horse as a symbol of victory, in contrast to the symbol of Jesus on the donkey. However, it's crucial to note that both of these symbols convey the duality of Jesus' victory: as He rode on a donkey to the cross, He rode as a victorious

king. No more and no less of a victorious king as when He rides into Armageddon!

This is what was being explained in chapter 5 when John learns that the Lion of Judah is the only one that has the power and authority to open the scrolls, and when he turns and looks to see the lion, he actually sees the lamb that was slain seated on the Throne instead, with the scroll in His hand.

Jesus Christ is both the Lion and the Lamb.

Why is this so important for us to understand?

Because when it comes to Jesus Christ, the image in Revelation 5 teaches us that both the Lion and the Lamb are symbols of victory just like the donkey and horse. The Lamb is symbolized by Jesus riding a donkey, and the Lion is symbolized by Jesus, riding the white horse. But make no mistake, He is both the Lion and the Lamb. And up until this point in the New Testament, we have only known Jesus as the Lamb, and so the temptation can be that when we see Him as the warrior, lion, that it is now that He will proceed to wage war against evil and defeat them in this most epic of battles. However, as we learned from chapter 16, the battle of Armageddon doesn't really happen does it? Jesus, on the white horse, just shows up and captures the two beasts, and then the dragon, and tosses them into the lake of fire. He is just cleaning up. Why? Because the final battle has already been fought and won.

On the cross.

You see it was on the cross that sin and death were defeated because death couldn't hold hold Him, the grave couldn't contain Him. Jesus rose victoriously!

Listen to what Paul says of this victory in:

Colossians 2:14b-15 (MSG)

'At the Cross, He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority and marched them naked through the streets.'

The battle for the world was fought, and won, on a Roman cross, on a hill called Calvary. On that cross, says the apostle Paul, Jesus the Lamb "disarmed" the rulers and authorities and "triumphed over them". The battle for the world was fought and won long before Jesus found John on the island of Patmos. The real Armageddon was fought and won in 30 AD. And so, because the final battle has already been fought and won on the cross...

Jesus is not riding towards victory, but riding from a place of victory.

He's simply riding to 'tie up loose ends.' He just speaks and everything stops. More on that in just a few minutes. But literally, He speaks, and the beast of the sea and the beast of the earth (also referred to as the false prophet) are thrown into the lake of fire. In the next chapter Jesus will take

care of the dragon from whom the two beasts got their power, and the same with death and hades. Done, finished. Jesus just speaks and everything stops.

Relate to 'dad-voice'

And as all of this is about to happen, we see the preceding invitation, go out to the birds of the air to come for supper. Not just any supper but specifically the supper of the great God. A supper where the birds of the air will fill their bellies with the flesh of the kings, captains, mighty men, horse and rider, and the flesh of all people.

Now, this section is a startlingly one and like much of the imagery used in this book can be hard to wrap our minds around. Understanding that this is figurative and symbolic language can help us though and in the case of the supper of the great God it can be better understood when we view it as a comparison to the other supper that an invitation has just been sent out to - the marriage supper of the Lamb. One chapter / two suppers / two very different meanings. It seems that John is telling us that everyone's destiny is a supper. Both of these suppers are prepared by God. One is a wedding feast for his Son and the other is a gory feast of the birds who eat up the carcasses of those who have rejected God.

So, the juxtaposition between these two highlights the ultimate destiny of humanity based on their response to God's invitation to salvation. Those who accept the invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb experience eternal fellowship and joy, while those who reject it will ultimately face judgment and condemnation.

And the irony lies in the fact that even though all have been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, many choose instead to suffer the consequences of the great supper of God due to their pride and refusal to accept the invitation.

The picture of the great supper of God is a picture of the wrath and judgment of God. We've seen similar pictures throughout this entire book and it must be understood that God's wrath and judgment are positioned towards sin. He made a way for humanity to escape the penalty of sin by paying the price that we should have on the cross, but if our sin is not accounted for by accepting this incredible gift, then sin will ultimately bring us to destruction. We saw this in the seven seals, the seven trumpets, the seven bowls and now in the great supper of God. All of which exist to answer one simple question: Who will you worship? To which there are only two options: Either you worship the beast or the Lamb; the harlot or the Bride; New Jerusalem or Babylon; the devil or the Christ.

There is no in-between. There is the fence sitting. There are only two options and the choice is ours to make.

This is why this section starts off with the description of Jesus Christ as Faithful and True. For no matter what happens in our world, Jesus sets the standard for what it means to be faithful because He and He alone went to the cross and exhibited His faithfulness to the Father and His faithfulness

to humanity by making it possible to defeat sin. Demonstrated by the mention of His robe dipped in blood. It's His blood on the robe - a reminder that it is His blood that brings salvation. And Jesus is true. He sets the standard, for all truth, for He has never not been true. He is the source of all truth. He is the righteous judge and as such, He simply cannot act outside of truth and righteousness. everything He does therefore is true, righteous and just. And because He is faithful and true, He can be trusted. You can trust Him because He has been faithful to you and will continue to be faithful towards you.

It is here that we also see the picture of Jesus with the sword out of His mouth which we saw all the way back in chapter 1 when John first described the warrior Jesus. Keep in mind that this is highly significant because it goes against what one would think of a warrior and a sword. It only seems natural that it would be in the hand, not the mouth. But this makes great sense for Jesus because Jesus' sword is His word not a metal instrument but His word! The only weapon that Jesus the warrior yields is His word! And given the power of that Word, it's the only weapon that He needs!

John 1:1 teaches us that in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. In the beginning, God spoke....and light, oceans, mountains, stars, forests, animals, humans..... life was created!! And when the word became flesh and dwelt among us, Jesus healed and liberated simply by speaking. Time and time again, He overcame the demonic simply by speaking. No fancy tricks. No exertion of superior force. Just a word. Be gone! And the demons fled. On the sea of Galilee, in a storm turned up by the demonic powers Jesus stands up and simply speaks, Be Still! And it was. At the tomb of Lazarus, a dead man, four days in the grave. Jesus says, Lazarus come out! And he does. Simply because Jesus spoke. In the beginning, He spoke and life was created. And so, in the end, when He speaks, evil is destroyed and it will be destroyed for all of eternity.

Jesus Christ only needs to show up and speak.

And it's exactly what He's doing today and tomorrow and forevermore!

He spoke to the storm in the New Testament and it stopped and He still speaks to the storms of life today. He spoke to dead Lazarus and he was restored to life and he is still speaking new life into dead situations today. He speaks life into dead relationships, life into frustrating work environments, life into hopeless circumstances and situations, and life into broken hearts. His voice brings healing, restoration, and renewal wherever it is heard. Just as He demonstrated His power and authority in the past, He continues to intervene in our lives today, showing us that He is sovereign over every situation and capable of bringing forth life from even the darkest of moments.

And as much as He is speaking, He invites us to speak as well. We only need to whisper the name Jesus: and mountains tremble, demons flee, knees bow in surrender, tongues confess, and hearts are transformed. In the simple utterance of His name, we wield the power of His authority, standing firm in His victory over every obstacle and challenge. And as we speak His name in faith, He restores peace, hope and trust.

Because He is the King of all kings, the Lord of all lords.

Jesus...Jesus...Jesus.

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