

I was reading the blog of a fellow pastor... who told about a time when he was preparing his sermon. ... His little daughter came in and said, "*Daddy, can we play?*" ... This brought back fond memories of when my daughters were young... and I was often challenged to decide which is more important... at that very moment.

This particular pastor answered... "*I'm awfully sorry, Sweetheart, but I'm right in the middle of preparing this sermon. In about an hour I can play.*"

She said, "*Okay, when you're finished, Daddy, I am going to give you a great big hug.*"

He said, "*Thank you very much.*" She went to the door and (these are his words) "*Then she did a U-turn and came back and gave me a chiropractic, bone-breaking hug.*" Pastor David said to his little daughter... "*Darling, you said you were going to give me a hug after I finished.*"

She answered, "*Daddy, I just wanted you to know what you have to look forward to!*"

The point of his writing this story... was to say: One meaning of Christmas is that God wants us to know, through this First Coming, how much we have to look forward to in the great Second Coming.

Here we are at the beginning of December... preparing our hearts and minds to celebrate Christ's first coming – with Christmas. And since we are currently studying the book of Revelation on Sunday mornings... my heart and mind has been (a lot) on the second coming... as well.

So when I read the pastor's point of his story about his daughter's hug... my mind immediately thought – "*There is not going to be much similarity between Christ's first coming to earth and His second coming. He will*

come and live on the earth once again... He will have followers... He will fulfill God's plan of the ages... and prophecy will be perfectly matched. But that is just about the end of the similarities."

The contrast between His first coming... and His second coming is stupendous. It is absolutely remarkable.

At the time of Christ's first coming, as George Macdonald put it:

*They all were looking for a King
To slay their foes and lift them high;
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.*

That is the way He entered the world the first time. He was meek and lowly. He is the Lamb that was slain. He was the Savior who died for sinners. ... and when He presented Himself to the world... declaring that He is the Messiah... He rode a humble donkey into Jerusalem... A little donkey denotes peace... not war.

But in the verses we come to this morning... that tell of His second coming... He comes on a majestic white stallion (an animal that portrays war and certain victory)... We see Him coming in His great glory. ... He has a sword in His mouth... and blood on His robe... because His coming will be the final manifestation of the wrath of God upon a sinful world. ... The rebellion of Satan... demons... and men is contained... put down... and judged. ... He puts down all unrighteousness before He establishes His Kingdom in righteousness.

In our day... teaching about God's love and tolerance seems like it is the **only** thing that is appropriate... because that is exclusively taught. God's

love and tolerance has become so predominant... that God's anger looks as if it is only a myth. ... But such a portrayal of God... hardly warns people away from sin. ... It is real... whether or not it is popular today... and it will be terrible for those who have steadfastly refused Him.

The major part of Christ's second coming is about a great war... rather than a harmless baby born in a smelly animal barn. ... It is the war that ends war before the millennial kingdom takes place. ... This war stops the opposition to Christ and makes it possible for Him to reign and rule on earth.

J Vernon McGee wrote:

“In the past there has been a very naive notion relative to the future, which is still held by some folk who are not students of the Bible. It is this: One of these days Jesus is going to come, and all the dead will be raised. The good guys will be on one side and the bad guys on the other. Christ will make the division so that one will enter heaven, the other hell, and eternity begins. May I say again that this is a very naive notion.”

In Revelation 19:11-16 we come to the great climax of all history. ... This is the once far-off divine event... toward which all human events... since the beginning of time have moved -- the unveiling of the presence of Jesus in power and great glory. ... It is the most prophesied event in the Bible.

Three different times in this book... at the end of each of the series of judgments... the opening of the seven seals... the seven trumpets... and the seven bowls of wrath... we have been brought to the very edge of this event... and each time the Spirit of Truth has brought us back again... to see in more intensified form... what God is doing in the world of that day. But now at last we come to the event itself.

But let's not study this event in order to have a proper understanding for how it all lines up on a calendar of end times... The reason I say this is because of a brief discussion I had last week... after the sermon.

Last week I was met at the back door and asked a question... concerning an important point that I did **not** address. I was asked about a phrase in the final verse of our passage of study. The phrase (found in Revelation 19:11) is: "*for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*" What does "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" mean?... I was asked.

You know... the explanation of this phrase... is why I caution against making our study... merely an attempt to know the timing of these events. It is also an excellent place for us to begin our study of the passage that immediately follows. So let's begin by starting in Revelation 19:10.

Revelation 19:10-11

The angel says, "*No, do not do that. I am merely another servant of the King. I am like you, one of those who bear the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!*" ... And how do you do that? ... The very spirit of prophecy, itself... tells us how... as the angel adds, "*the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*"

Here is what the angel is saying: "All prophecy points only to Jesus." It is not designed to give us a calendar of the last days... How sad that many people who study Revelation ONLY read it for that. ... No! Don't do that! ... The spirit... (in other words... the essence)... of prophecy... is to bear witness to Jesus. ... He is the central figure of all Scripture. ... It is not events which we are to focus on... but the **One** Who brings them to pass... the Lord Jesus himself. ... Thus we are instructed here by the angel to

focus our attention upon Him. ... So that is what we intend to do this morning... as we study these verses... (the climax of the Bible.) We are going to worship God... the way the angel told John... ... An act of worship... is to study Scripture... focusing on Jesus...!

Revelation 19:1

That Jesus is seated on "a white horse" proclaims that he comes as the conquering warrior. This was a provocative image in the Roman world in which John wrote. In a culture where emperors and conquering generals rode white horses in triumph, John sees the ultimate conqueror coming in absolute triumph. John then makes several descriptive statements about the rider on the white horse. The first two are here in verse 11.

First, unlike so many conquerors, the Warrior Messiah is "Faithful and True." Finally the ruler for whom we all long will have arrived. ... Another rider on a white horse... was shown to John... and he wrote about it back in chapter six (verse 2.) It happened at the opening of the first seal. That rider on a white horse was a counterfeit. ... He wanted to be esteemed as Christ... so he appeared on a white horse. ... It did not take long... however... for it to be revealed that he was not Christ. ... The white horse in our present chapter... though... carries the real (or "TRUE") Christ.

He is "FAITHFUL and true"... All of God's promises that He ever made (including those that He made with His covenant people – the Jews... are about to be completely satisfied. The first descriptive statement is that He is faithful and true.

A second descriptive statement is that... the coming King will judge and make war "*in righteousness*." No one will question His decisions... no one will doubt the justice of His cause... no one will be able to refute the utter clarity of His motives and purposes. ... They may rebel against Him... but there will be no unrighteousness in Him.

Our Lord comes to execute *perfect* justice... in judging and making war. At last... as Scripture has long promised... all the wrongs done on earth will be made right... all the cheats and scams that we are familiar with today will be exposed and corrected... all drugs that blow the minds of people will be eliminated... all crime will be brought to an end... all hatred among mankind will cease... for Jesus comes to judge the earth and to right all matters.

Revelation 19:12

Here... we read another descriptive statement. "*His eyes are like a flame of fire.*" ... This tells us that Jesus is absolutely pure and that He sees all things. ... We will all be the subjects of this King... and everyone will give an account to Him. ... There are no compartments of our lives that He does not see. ... There are no corners of our hearts that His flaming eyes do not search. ... All things are open and laid bare before His eyes.

A fourth descriptive statement is: "*on his head are many diadems.*" The "*many diadems*" on his head communicate His absolute authority. There is no dominion... no region... no locality over which He does not reign. He is Lord of all... and He wears the crown of every place.

No longer will wrongful rulers plunder His creation. ... It is He whose right it is... not only as Creator... but also as Redeemer. ... Only the Lamb was worthy to break the seals on the scroll... conveying ownership of the earth (back in Revelation 5:9)... unleashing the great series of purging judgments... known as the Tribulation... that had finally taken control from the rebel kings. ... Now He wears their crowns as He rides forth in triumph.

McGee wrote:

He will be the sole ruler of this earth. And His rulership is going to be a dictatorship, I can assure you of that. My friend, if you don't love Jesus Christ -- if He is not your Savior -- and you live to enter this period of His return to the earth, it is going to be a most uncomfortable period for you because Christ is going to be a dictator. A chicken won't peep, a rooster won't crow, and a man will not move without His permission. He is the King of Kings and He is the Lord of Lords.

Let me ask you to consider Christ's authority over you... right now. ... When the King gives an order... however mundane the command may seem... the carrying out of the directive... is significant to the servant... to the degree that he loves His master. ... If you conceive of yourself as serving your Master... you will not need preeminence... prosperity... position... promotions... praises... or popularity.

"His eyes are like blazing fire and on his head are many crowns, and he has a name written on him that no one knows but himself."

The fifth descriptive statement... is that He has a name that none of us will know. This points to the divinity of Christ... because it shows that there are aspects of God... that we will never know. God is infinite... which means

that we will never exhaust Him. ... There are attributes of Jesus in this passage that can be known... and there are aspects of who He is... to which we have no access. ... He is transcendent. ... He reveals Himself to us... but He is ultimately beyond our ability to comprehend.

Christ alone knows the whole of who He is. ... He alone has been found able to open the seals of God's will and purposes and he alone can put it all into effect. ... Only He has a full understanding of His nature. ... It serves as a great reminder to each of us... even if we understand His kingship... even if we begin to understand what it means that He is the Word of God... and even if we recognize that He is Faithful and True... to remain truly humble before the One Who is God Himself. ... As created beings we shall never... even in all eternity... know all that God knows... for He is God... and we are still the creature. ... It is exciting to know that... even in heaven... we will still learn new things about our Lord Jesus!

Friday morning my daughter asked me if I ever read the book “The Shack” by William P. Young. I told her that I had... and I thought that I heard her gasp a tiny bit. “Dad...?” She asked. *“Is it Christian? ... Our pastor told us that we should never read that book...”*

I told her that I probably would not have read it... but it was a requirement for one of my doctoral classes a few years ago... but that I was glad that I had read it. ... “Why?” came the next question. ... *“Because it challenged me not to contain my image of God in a nice and tight little box... that He is much bigger and beyond anything my thoughts can conceive...”*

You see... in this controversial novel... God appears to the main character (who is a white male)... as a gruff older black lady... who he could not predict. Her manner and message kept confounding him... as she wisely helped him through a crisis... and develop him.

My daughter's pastor probably condemned the book because the Bible always uses masculine pronouns for God – not female pronouns. And the Shack presents God appearing as a woman. I understand why some Christians are upset by this... I don't think we should alter Scripture – but I found value in this fictional story... because it challenged me to hold my own mental images of God loosely... and to know that He is way beyond my thoughts and perception. I'm sure that we are all going to be surprised when we get to Glory. "Oh! I didn't know it was like this..." (Now... no one will be disappointed... but there are so many things that our sinful minds cannot comprehend.) ... And I think this is the exact point we are to take from John's mentioning a Name for Jesus we cannot know.

Revelation 19:13

Our sixth descriptive statement is that He wears "a robe dipped in blood." This is a reference to Isaiah 63... where the robe of the Messiah is splattered with the blood of His enemies. ... This fascinating passage is a dialogue between Isaiah... and the Warrior-Messiah. ... As Isaiah is shown the coming of Christ, it is as though he is standing in Jerusalem looking toward the south, toward Edom, and he sees a great warrior coming with garments stained red. He asks the question:

Isa 63:1 (ESV)

Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from

Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save."

The prophet asks again:

Isa 63:2

Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress?

The warrior replies,

Isa 63:3-4

"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption had come.

Jesus conquered His enemies by shedding **His Own** blood on the cross... and when He returns He will conquer His enemies by shedding **their** blood.

So which conquest will be the one that involves you? ... If you trust in Jesus... His blood is shed for you. ... If you rebel against Him... refusing to have Him as Lord and obey Him as King... **your** blood will be shed for **Him**. I invite you to trust Him right now. ... Let His blood count for you. ... Live for Him. ... Why would you be among those whose blood He will shed?

The seventh descriptive statement is the third title we read in this passage – "The Word of God." "The Word of God" is one of the familiar names of our Lord in Scripture (John 1:1-14). Just as we reveal our minds and hearts to others by our words... so the Father reveals Himself to us through His Son - the incarnate Word. ... A word is made up of letters... and Jesus

Christ is called "Alpha and Omega" in Rev 21:6, 22:13. (These are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet.) He is the complete alphabet... of everything we need to describe God. ... He is the "divine alphabet" of God's revelation to us.

If you have believed in Jesus... if you have placed your faith and hope in Him... and what he achieved on the cross... the Bible is talking about you in the next verse. You are included in the scene that is described here. Look what we will be part of... (This ought to excite every one of us...)

Revelation 19:14

Maybe we should all learn some equestrian skills... for riding horses... from Boyd McCulley... Jerry Payne... or Haley Wessels... because we are going to be part of this cavalry. We will each be on a perfectly trained white horse... and wearing our new white robes... (which we saw were given to us last week in verse 8 of this same chapter.) The emphasis on the fine linen in these two verses that are mentioned so close together... assures me that this ***is*** us!

The Apostle Paul also wrote that we will return with Him...

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (ESV)

so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

White robes of fine linen is ***not*** the usual apparel of an army... ... but this is ***not*** the usual army. ... Wearing white linen in battle seems like a strange way to dress for war. ... Perhaps the armies of Heaven wear white because Jesus is the one who will do all the fighting. The enemy will not be so

clothed... but righteousness (which the white symbolizes) will be the *strength* of the day. It will be unnecessary for us to fight... because (as we are about to see) Christ Himself will defeat the enemy through His spoken Word.

So... why are we going to be there...? What is our purpose for being with Him as He rides into battle...? ... To make the King look good. He redeemed them by his blood... cleansed them... enabled them to do good deeds... fitted them out in fine white linen... put them on majestic white battle stallions... and all their splendor highlights and augments his greatness. ... The return of Christ is often described as “His glorious appearing...” ... I don’t think fireworks and cannonades could be more glorious than a sudden appearance of the King of Kings with millions and millions of bright white horses and saints (made righteous.) What an incredible sight – never before experienced!

When you think about who you are... does your place in this cavalry define your identity? ... The Bible tells us that we are worse than we think we are. When we read about the significance of our sin in the Bible... we realize that it is a lot more heinous than we thought. But the Bible also tells us that if we trust in Jesus... the role we play in God's purposes is more exalted than we would ever expect. ... Believer in Jesus... one day you will ride a white horse to victory in the cavalry charge led by the risen Christ Himself...!

Revelation 19:15-16

We see His title written both on His thigh and on His robe... both places that would be highly visible on anyone seated on horseback: 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords.' Jesus is the One Who rides out to battle.

The armies that follow have no weapons. ... In fact... there seems to be only one offensive weapon... and that is "**a sharp sword**"... which represents the Word of God. ... One needs only to read the account of creation to understand that when God speaks... things happen. ... Christ will need no man made weapon to defeat the Antichrist and his army. ...The Word of God carries unlimited power... whether it is for creation or for destruction. ... The Word of God brings salvation to those who believe and will... just as surely... bring judgment to those who refuse to believe.

Have you ever been infatuated by the Word of God? ... Some of us have had that experience. ... Some word from the Bible has caught our attention and awakened our conscience... and we are suddenly aware that God sees deeper into us than we thought He ever could. ... We become aware of how guilty we are.

On the day of Pentecost the Jews who were listening to Peter's great message... at the end "were cut to the heart" (we read in Acts 2:37). They were smitten by the Word of God. ... I think also of that scene in Acts when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit. ... When Peter... speaking by the Spirit... exposed their lies... they both dropped dead instantly... . So... here... there are those who will be killed by the sword... which comes from the Lord's mouth.

That "rod of iron" is a symbol of tough justice... of unbending... unwavering righteousness. ... It is the standard of God's morality which he cannot lessen or diminish in any way. ... This is descriptive of the millennial years when righteousness will reign in all the earth. ... There will be sin and sinners present... but they cannot upset things... their evil will be immediately brought to justice. ... This characterizes that millennial day.

The effect of our Lord's appearance upon the antichristian enemies we have been observing... is given in Verses 17 on. ... Here we will learn what is meant by the phrase "*he treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.*"

First... there is a call to a great slaughter.

Revelation 19:17-18

If there is one passage of Scripture which is revolting to read... ***this*** is *it*! You will notice that God included it at the end of His Word to remind us how revolting and nauseating to Him are the deeds of the flesh. ... Men who live in the flesh... will have their flesh destroyed. ... This scene reveals the heart of man and how dreadful that heart really is.

This is an invitation at the end of the Battle of Armageddon to the carrion-eating fowl to a banquet on earth. ... It is vivid and clear and horrific. ... It is a picture of birds being summoned to eat the carcasses of those who die in battle. ... On that battlefield it will not just be the troops (free and slave, small and great) who lie dead... but all their leaders... the kings... generals... and mighty men... also die. ... No one escapes.

An invitation had gone out long ago... to come to a different feast - the marriage supper of the Lamb... and many had responded. ... Now an invitation is issued to this feast... which is called “the supper of the great God”... but what a difference in the two suppers! ... The guests at the one are the redeemed saints of the ages... joyfully feasting in the presence of the Redeemer. ... Those invited to the other... are the birds of prey and the carrion-eating fowl from all over the world... and their dinner is to be the flesh and blood of the slain multitudes at Armageddon.

Revelation 19:19

The beast, the earth's kings... and their armies want to overcome the Creator and do away with him. ... They want to set up their own alternative kingdom — as though they could somehow engage a reality where the Creator of reality is not in charge! ... Theirs is the epitome of mission impossible.

This is foolishness of the highest order. ... Do you participate in this folly? Are you living your life to prepare to be part of this kamikaze mission against an Almighty Conqueror? ... As you plan your days... as you think about what you want from life... as you respond to the circumstances that develop around you... are you trying to somehow engage in a reality... where Sovereign God is not in charge...?

... ..

Revelation 19:20-21

It is almost incredible... is it not... that when Jesus reveals Himself... and every eye sees Him... that these leaders of the nations actually attempt to assault and attack the Lord himself: "They gather to make war against the Lord and his armies." ... But it is an unequal contest. ... The beast and the prophet are immediately captured and thrown into the lake of fire... which in Chapters 21 and 22 is called "the second death." ... It is a terrible symbol of eternal torment... a fire... an inward torment that burns on and on and never ends.

Dr. Kent Hughes has a pointed way that he concludes his Bible commentary on this chapter. I would like to close this message with his conclusion.

Perpetrators of lies and temptations will be justly judged, and those who gave themselves to falsehood will regret what they have done. Don't believe their lies.

Long for Christ's appearing. Obey him with an instant willingness. Your deeds are significant when done unto God. Treasure God. Nothing can do for us what only God can do for us:

- Don't look to *pornography* to satisfy you in ways that only God can. God made beauty not for idolatry but so we would catch a glimpse of his beauty. Worship God, not things in his image.
- Refuse the tendency to rely on all that *money* can do for you in terms of security and prestige and happiness. God gives us money so we can have some conception of his inexhaustible riches and entire self-sufficiency.

- Don't remain in *slothful indulgence* looking for lengthened periods of rest to renew you. God built us so that, as Augustine put it, we have no rest until we rest in him.
- Don't expect other human beings to absolutely satisfy the need you feel for *companionship and love*. God gives us earthly relationships so that we can understand more about love.

The false excitement of sinful pleasure can be likened to the rush of a daring leap off a building fifty stories tall. It will end in destruction. Don't live for a rush that ends in destruction. Live to mount a white horse and ride to victory.