

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." <sup>10</sup>And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

<sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had<sup>[e]</sup> a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup>He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup>And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND  
LORD OF LORDS.

<sup>17</sup>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" <sup>18</sup>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<sup>[u]</sup> and slave, both small and great."

<sup>19</sup>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. <sup>20</sup>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.<sup>21</sup> 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.

We come now to a climax in the Book of Revelation. We have seen the story, if you will, build to this point. The seven churches are addressed, and then we are taken into the heavenly throne room where the seven sealed scroll is opened, by the one who was like unto a lamb who had been slain, and when this is opened judgment begins being poured out on the covenant breakers.

The judgments from chapter 6 on have been building in intensity and in scope, until in these last few chapters we have seen the city of Mystery Babylon being specifically targeted by God's righteous wrath. I have discussed several reasons as to why we should read Babylon, as discussed in this book as apostate Jerusalem, but perhaps one of the most telling reasons is because in chapter 18, when speaking of this Babylon we read, "*and in her was found the blood of the prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.*" Our Lord very clearly made this same judgment on Jerusalem in Matthew 23. There are multiple references in the New Testament where Jerusalem is mentioned as the city that slays the prophets and in Matthew 23 Jesus tells the people in Jerusalem that all the righteous blood shed upon the earth would come upon them in that generation.

The earlier parts of this book have detailed many of these judgments. We have already dealt with the early parts of chapter 19 two sermons ago. The featured event in that message was the marriage of the Bride to the Bridegroom. We left off with the verse that says "Write: 'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' The church of Jesus Christ is His Bride. Those who have been purchased by the blood of the lamb are raised up into heavenly places with Him where they rule and reign with Christ.

But what is the nature of the reign of Christ and what is the nature of his kingdom? Well much of what we talk about today may not be new to you, but I can assure you it is something that is very little understood amongst the modern church. I want to

talk about one of the reasons for that right now. Most people who read their Bible's make a very serious error when reading the Scripture. I want to try and explain to you what that error is. Most Bible's and the New King James, which I have read from today is not immune to this error, place what are called "section headings" before certain passages in the Scripture. People often read these, and make the assumption that the section and chapter headings are part of the inspired text. Well, they are not. In Chapter 19 in the NKJV there are three "section headings." These are not part of the text, but I will give the NKJV a little credit here, their section headings actually basically cover exactly what the text says. For example, this first section of our reading today is titled, "Christ on a White Horse." Truthfully everyone who reads this passage can figure that out, and so the section heading in this case is not at all leading or deceptive.

What is very interesting, I have actually looked at this text in several different Bibles and they headings over these verses which are clearly not taken from the Biblical text, but they are imposed on the text by a theological system. I have seen this section labeled as "The Second Coming of Christ" or something along that vein, or I have also seen this section called "The Battle of Armageddon." The Greek word Armageddon appears only one time in the New Testament, and it is three chapters before this, but for whatever reason that does not stop Bible editors from placing Armageddon here.

The reason for this, I believe, has everything to do with the imagery of this passage. We see the rider on the White Horse, clearly Christ, but he is being followed by the armies in the heavens, and they are making war with the beast and his armies. The thought by many who read the passage is, ah this is it, this is the final clash, this is The Great Battle of Armageddon, This is the final vanquishing of Satan and his armies. Well, it is, but if we read this text we will see it is not quite the way many people read it.

John begins this section with the words, "And I saw heaven opened." This is immediately after the reference to the blessings that come to those who participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb. Farrar says of this passage, "every intermediary vanishes between himself and Christ." Those who participate in Christ's communion are celebrating his victory and this victory is shown by Christ seated on a white horse and riding forth in victory.

If you will recall all the way back in Revelation 6 John sees a rider on a white horse and he is going forth, "conquering and to conquer." He is overcoming. In Chapter 6 we are seeing the beginning of our Lord's conquests, Here in Revelation 19 he is also conquering all of His enemies, but what we see a little bit of more detail on this going forth of the rider of the white horse.

And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup>His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had<sup>[e]</sup> a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup>He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

In Revelation 1 verse 5 Jesus is referred to as the "faithful witness." Here we see Him in righteousness judging and making war. The Psalms are full of references to this righteous judgment of the Lord.

## Psalms 72

Give the king Your judgments, O God,  
And Your righteousness to the king's Son.  
<sup>2</sup>He will judge Your people with righteousness,  
And Your poor with justice.

## Psalms 96

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;  
<sup>12</sup>Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it.  
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD.  
<sup>13</sup>For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.

He shall judge the world with righteousness,  
And the peoples with His truth.

The prophets also speak of this period of righteous judgment of the Lord.

Now in Revelation see following Him those who have participated in the marriage supper of the lamb. They are described as also riding white horses, just like their leader, and they are clothed in fine linen white and clean. It is interesting that earlier in this very chapter of Revelation that the Bride the lamb's wife, about her it is said, "it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. is described." We are actually told that it is the Bride that is dressed in the fine linen, and now, after the marriage ceremony we see her following the Bridegroom riding forth in victory.

Christ judges the nations with a sharp two edged sword. This sword is not, however, wielded in the way we usually see a sword wielded. This sword goes forth from the mouth of the rider on the horse. Clearly, this is judgment from the word of God. Ephesians 6 is one of the most well known scriptures in the Bible that speaks of the armor of the Lord. And in this passage we are told to take up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. The Word of the Lord is the ultimate weapon by which Christ will subdue kings and kingdoms and nations and all of God's enemies. Hebrews 4 tells us that the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is NO creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Hosea 6:5 says in part, "I have slain them by the words of my mouth; and your judgments are like light that goes forth."

Here we see the judgment of God, the light of the World going forth in victory, and He goes forth subduing all of His enemies with the Word of His mouth. This judgment is often misunderstood. It is in this riding forth where we also read that he will 'rule the nations with a rod of iron.'

The reference to ruling the nations with a rod of iron is from a Psalm that we should be very familiar with. Psalm 2.

"I will declare the decree:

The LORD has said to Me,

'You *are* My Son,

Today I have begotten You.

<sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will give *You*

The nations *for* Your inheritance,

And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.

<sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron;

You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.

The Messiah has claimed His bride, and He is now going forth and claiming his inheritance. He is doing this because the Messiah has already taken possession of His throne. The nations of the World are His inheritance, the ends of the earth are his possession. Again looking at the Book of Daniel we read of the coming of the Son of Man to take His Kingdom:

I was watching in the night visions,

And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,

Coming with the clouds of heaven!

He came to the Ancient of Days,

And they brought Him near before Him.

<sup>14</sup> Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,

That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.

His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,

Which shall not pass away,

And His kingdom *the one*

Which shall not be destroyed.

Christ claimed His kingdom at His ascension, He came to the Ancient of Days to Him was given His royal inheritance. And what we are seeing here in Chapter 19 is the outset of beginning of this heavenly dominion.

But in what way then do the armies in heaven participate in this divine rule? The text tells us that the armies in heaven follow Him. The picture that is given us, and we will look at this in more detail as we look at chapter 21 is presented as being in heaven. Ephesians 2:6 says of the Church of Jesus Christ that..

*"God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. "*

I think we often forget the significance of the phrase "he raised up and caused us to sit in heavenly places." This means we are with Christ and we are following after Him. We speak this way often, but let us really take notice of what is being said here. The Church of Jesus Christ is not of this world, we are from above. We sit with Christ and when we gather together in His name, and when we worship together, we are actually waging war with the kingdoms of this world.

Our weapons are like the Sword of the Spirit sharp and powerful, 2 Corinthians 10 tells us:

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.<sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, <sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."*

You see as we follow Christ in obedience to His commands, as we follow Him in worship, and as we participate in the marriage supper of the lamb we are actually tearing down the strongholds of the enemy. We are subduing nations, the Lord is judging them with a rod of iron, and that rod of iron is subduing nations under His holy law. We are told in Daniel that the Kingdom and the dominion that belong to Christ is an everlasting dominion, and in Isaiah we are told that of the increase of His government and peace there would be no end. This portrait in Rev. 19 is a portrait of everlasting growth of the Kingdom of God. It's growth is accomplished through Christ and His Church and they are subduing all of His enemies.

The Lord's enemies, and what happens to them are described in the last few verses of Chapter 19.

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<sup>18</sup> 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<sup>19</sup> and slave, both small and great."

This supper of the great God is meant to be contrasted with the marriage supper of the lamb. The feasters, if you will, of this great supper are the birds of the air. Interestingly in Deuteronomy 28, which we have discussed before as the chapter which spells out the blessings for obedience and faithfulness to God's commands, and the curses for disobedience, one of the curses is spelled out in verse 26, "Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away." Verse 49 -53 even more explicitly states that "Jehovah will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. <sup>51</sup> And they shall eat the increase of your livestock



and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you.

<sup>52</sup> “They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. <sup>53</sup> You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.

Peter Leithart said of this feasting of the scavengers which is also discussed in Ezekiel 39 that it has a cleansing effect on the land. “The expanded invitation to the birds of prey comes immediately after a discussion of the land being cleansed through the burial of the dead.” In regard to this passage in Revelation Leithart says that by his victory the Warrior has cleansed the earth of the influence of the beast and of the false prophet, and all of this combined with the fall of Babylon and the binding of the dragon inaugurates a period of unprecedented power for the Church. He says this victory is so great, that even the slain bodies of His opponents remain, the beast is utterly defeated.

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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.

This last section of Chapter 19 details the destruction of the enemies of Christ. Some of what this says will be discussed in more detail in our next message, but the verse I want to look at is the last one. The rest were killed with the sword which

proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. What is evident from this is that the power of Christ and those who follow Him comes from His word. Going back to Psalms 2, there is a command to Kiss the son, lest He be angry and you perish in the way. All those who hear God's Words and submit to it are killed by losing their life for the sake of Christ, and those who hear and resist are struck down.

This passage, the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation is the passage that details the end of unfaithful Israel. Alongside of that we witness one of the most significant events that the Bible speaks of, one of the most significant events in the history of creation. Christ comes in the full force and glory of His kingdom. This coming is a significant event, He is coming in judgment against unfaithful Israel, But he is also coming in judgment against the rest of the world. He is empowering His Church, when they speak His Word, to bring about His purposes. Jesus said He would build His Church, and the gates of Hell would never prevail against it. He gave his church authority to bind and loose and this is done through the power of His word. And the thing we need to see in this passage it this authority and power began during the public ministry of Jesus, and the destruction of Jerusalem was the initial coming of Christ in His Kingdom.

We are going to be singing a song in a minute from the 98<sup>th</sup> Psalm. This, by the way, is the very Psalm that Isaac Watts was writing about when he penned the well known Christmas Carol, "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come." But the last verse of Joy to the World goes like this "He rules the world, with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove, the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love."

I have heard criticisms in the past about this Hymn, that it is not about Christ's First advent, but about His second, where this criticism comes from is people missing that Christ has actually already established His Kingdom. We pray in the Lord's Prayer every Sunday, "Thy Kingdom Come thy will be done, on earth as

it is in heaven.” Yes Christ’s Kingdom has already come, but there is a very real sense that it is still coming. It is growing, nations are being subdued under the force and authority of God’s Word, and so today as we sing, “Because He comes, He surely comes, the judge of earth to be,” Let us understand that Christ’s Kingdom has come, His Kingdom is coming, and it’s final and total manifestation is greater than anything we could possibly imagine.