

Revelation 19:11–21

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[0 : 00] Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God.

And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.

[1 : 17] And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped its image.

These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur, and the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Good afternoon to you.

What a reading, what a passage of scripture that has been read before us.

I pray that the Lord would give us grace for speaking and grace for hearing his word on this afternoon. Would you pray with me to that end? Lord Jesus, praise you for your love for us, for being a wonderful, merciful Savior, but also a very just, a righteous judge.

[2 : 44] Praise you for the wedding of those dimensions of your being, of your character, all in yourself. I pray that you would help us to embrace both and help, Lord, on this afternoon as we listen to your word to us.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. The ESV Bible, if you're looking at the one that's been provided for you, or really any of those Bibles, it has a header over this particular passage of scripture, these verses, and that header says, the rider on a white horse.

That is the way that we enter into this particular passage, but that particular header by no means exhausts what we see here.

The, really the content could be better titled the victorious Christ, or as commentator William Barclay has noted, the conquering Christ.

whatever you want to call it, it is a very stunning portrait of Christ that we see here. And I believe it's a portrait that is really unparalleled in all of scripture as to what is really concentrated in particularly the first paragraph that is there.

[4 : 13] The first words of the passage help us to see that John has entered into yet another visionary experience. Then I saw heaven open.

You see that again as he sees a second vision in verse 17. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun.

Visionary experiences. What John has been allowed to do through the work the person of Christ in the book of Revelation is to get you might even say the rest of the story.

Because on the one hand we can look and see and hear what is happening on the earthly scene on the earthly plane but that's not all to it. Scripture enables us to see the rest of the story.

And that is what we see through the book of Revelation. Verses 11 through 16 include a combination of words and images to describe Christ as an incomparable sovereign.

[5 : 22] Words and images that come together that enable us to see him in his glory in a sense but also as the Christ the righteous judge who is coming.

We have a composite picture a portrait a collage of sorts of this conquering Christ. What I want you to see and I want to take a little time to go through these particulars because there are things I believe that we need to click on and see and really understand what is here.

And I pray that the Lord would open the eyes of our understanding that we might see Christ as he is presented here. Verses 11 through 16 we have a vision of the conquering Christ.

His description and if you look at the first part of verse 11 it says I saw heaven open and behold a white horse. We see there his agenda the agenda of the conquering Christ and though it is somewhat veiled his agenda is an agenda of conquest.

An agenda of conquest. When heaven's curtain is opened here was rolled back the first thing that John saw was a white horse. He saw a white horse and when he saw a white horse he saw this symbol of conquest and victory.

[6 : 59] That's what that was of that day. In chapter 6 you remember we saw the four horsemen of the apocalypse and the first horse as it were out of the gate was a white horse with a rider and that too depicted was a depiction of conquest.

One of the reasons that we understand that is because the things the horses that followed them are the things that happened after war and conquest happened. What do you mean?

Famine and other things and pledge those kinds of things they followed after the first horse Revelation chapter 6 came then and what we see there are those sort of benign judgments that are the lot of peoples on the earth and they have been that way all through history and even so between the first advent and the second advent of Christ those kinds of plagues those kinds of judgments they run the course of the time between Christ's coming but when a Roman general celebrated a triumph it did so on the back of a white horse I mean today you might have you know these fast cars are somewhat a symbol I remember back in the day I don't know if you all remember the television program Knight Rider probably dates me but Michael Knight had Kit and Kit was somewhat a symbol of conquest there are other indicators that a hero has come a person with an agenda and a good agenda and the agenda that we see here symbolized by this white horse was an agenda of conquest the symbol of a conqueror when Christ returns his agenda will be one of conquest you remember his first coming his agenda was different the son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost the word became flesh dwelt among us we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten full of grace and truth and through him there was grace upon grace and forgiveness it was an agenda of redemption when Christ comes the second time unto them who look for him the second time shall he appear and his agenda will be one of conquest all of those who have not fallen under his lordship on the basis of his first coming will indeed be the targets of his conquest because they have not yielded to the son!

First part we see the agenda of the conquering Christ at his second coming it is an agenda of conquest but look at the next part of the verse we see his reputation look there with me the one sitting on it is called faithful and true and in righteousness he judges and makes war the reputation of the conqueror is that he is faithful and true and another way of saying that that he is absolutely trustworthy we've seen him elsewhere in the book chapter 1 chapter 3 particularly chapter 3 verse 14 and to the angel of the church and Laodicea write the words of the amen the faithful and true witness the beginning of God's creation these words faithful and true describe

[10 : 54] Christ as the absolutely trustworthy one he's dependable he's honorable he is the one who delivers what is expected he does not fall short and aren't these the kind of characteristics that we want in someone who assumes rule the one who under whose governance we find ourselves we want them to be trustworthy that always isn't the case is it even with sitting officials they have been found not to be trustworthy such was the case in one of the major cities of our nation in Detroit where the mayor was not found to be trustworthy and he no longer is the mayor such was the case in our own state with the governor he found was found not to be trustworthy and he no longer is in the government the seat of the governor but here is one the one who conquers is described as faithful and true and brothers and sisters those who have trust to

Christ you and I know that there is no one more trustworthy than he is Jesus was entrusted to do the father's will on earth he stated that he had come to do the will of him that sent me and he did just that listen to his words in John chapter 17 verse 4 he says this I glorified you on earth having accomplished the work that you gave me to do into the hands of Christ was entrusted the work of redemption and you remember he was tempted there in the wilderness to take a short cut and to sort of thwart or sidestep the purposes of God getting the glory without the suffering but he said I would have nothing to do with that it is written you shall worship the Lord that you're God and him only shall you serve he was trustworthy entrusted with the work of creation entrusted with the work of redemption and will be entrusted with the work of judgment in the future his agenda conquest his reputation faithful and true trustworthy his administration is righteous he operates in righteousness you see that in in in in righteousness he judges and makes war look what we have wedded there together you have both judicial and executive functions in one person that is in Christ there are various ways in which governments governors can function and operate think of the administrations and the various government officials corrupt is one word to describe them inconsiderate greedy insensitive self-serving but this particular picture of the administration of Christ it contrasts with the very beastly rulers the ruling powers of this world his standard operating procedure his SOP is righteousness in righteousness he judges and makes war he is righteous in both judicial and executive matters no division no corruption in his governance he is the judge of all the earth according to genesis chapter 18 who will do right

Paul looks at him in second timothy chapter 4 and he speaks of him the lord who is the righteous judge will give me speaking about rewards on that day people deserve a ruler who rules without partiality this is him this is Christ he rules his administration is the righteous look at verse 12 his eyes are like a flame of fire and on his head are many diadems and he has a name written that no one knows but himself his judgment is perfect his judgment it speaks about his eyes as a flame of fire brothers and sisters this is not a reference to eye color I mean this is not designer contacts that he has on here it speaks about his penetrating gaze it speaks about the quality of his vision he misses nothing because his vision is perfect and because his vision is absolutely perfect so is his judgment look at this conquering

Christ and this composite picture that we see of him that is laid out here for us what about his authority see that in the next part of it of the verse on his head are many diadems and he has a name written that no one knows but himself it focuses!

[16:24] on the authority of the conquering Christ and on his head note are many crowns you remember we saw the dragon in chapter 12 verse 3 we saw the beast in chapter 13 verse 1 and they had many heads!

many crowns but the governing Christ the conquering Christ is pictured here as having one head but many crowns these crowns are not Stephanos which are the wreath of victory these are diadems and these are the crowns of royalty the picture here that we have is one of his absolute authority he is the supreme ruler of all kings and kingdoms Christ that's the way that is pictured here and it mirrors what we see in verse 16 we're on his robe and on his thigh in plain sight that speak of his supremacy he's the he would be the prime minister of prime ministers or the president of presidents or the mayor governors oh but scriptures puts it better than we can put it in the ancient language and we all understand it don't we to be king above all kings and lord above all lords his authority brothers and sisters is absolute his agenda conquest his reputation faithful and true his administration is righteous his judgment is perfect his authority is absolute and his name verse 12 the last part of it is mysterious you see that there it said he has a name written that no one knows but himself that that's interesting isn't it the supremacy of this one is seen further the fact that he has an unknowable and inscrutable dimension to it one idea behind this is that it may be it was an old idea that to know the name of a divine being was to have a certain power over him you remember

Jacob in Genesis chapter 32 he was wrestling with the angel of the Lord he said tell me your name what he said how is it that you ask!

While his revealed name provides a measure of glorious revelation about him there is also an element of majestic mystery that we see here with the conquering Christ Jesus speaking in Matthew chapter 11 verse 27 says this all things have been handed over to me by my father and no one knows the son notice the intimacy between the father and the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him look at the

conquering Christ here and the various dimensions that are in this one composite picture and it includes the fact there is a mysterious dimension!

And though we have various names that are here again there is a measure I mean that's one of the characteristics of deity isn't it godness though there is a measure that's revealed there's so much to know that we will not know it all and that is throughout eternity that still god there is an unknowable dimension a marvelous majestic mystery as it concerns our god notice his clothing in verse 13 his clothing is mission what I would call it's mission appropriate in verse 13 the clothing of the conquered christ comes in the view let me read it for you again he is clothed with a robe dipped in blood and the name by which he is called is the word of god huh his robe!

[20 : 47] his robe is dipped in blood the choice as to what that means can be two fold it could look back at the redemptive work of christ where he in fact shed his blood it could speak of the blood of atonement shed on the cross for our sins and our forgiveness it could look back at that but on the other hand it could look forward and anticipate the judgment work of Christ and his victory over his foes his enemies in view of what seems to be this context of judgment it seems that the latter would seem to fit best if victory over his enemies is anticipated then verse what we see in verse 13 fits what we see in Isaiah chapter 63 as matter of fact turn back over there to Isaiah chapter 63 you'll find that on page 622 in the pew Bibles there it speaks of the blood of the conqueror being sprinkled with the blood of the garments of the conqueror being sprinkled with the blood of his enemies look there

Isaiah chapter 63 who is this who comes from Edom in crimson you know that is a shade of red garments from Basra he who is splendid in his apparel marching in the greatness of his strength it is I speaking in righteousness and I love this term mighty to save why is your garment your apparel red and your garments like his who treads the wine press I have trodden the wine press alone and from the peoples no one was with me I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath their life blood splattered on my garments and stained all my apparel and again as you back in Revelation if you will look down to see even in verse 15 he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God almighty his garments mission appropriate whether you're talking about past redemption or future judgment either way his clothing is mission appropriate kind of clothing notice his role in the next part of the verse his role as a revealer of

God the word of God that's what we see in the last part of verse 13 it's a more familiar title a more familiar name in Christ the word made flesh and in that the person and will and the purposes of God are made visible no one has seen the father John chapter one at any time but the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the father he has made him known he has revealed him so we see in the first coming the redemptive purposes of God are made known and seen and revealed in the person and the work of Christ and even so in the second coming of Christ God's retribution will be likewise revealed through him first coming it was a revelation of God's grace and the second coming Christ will manifest God's perfect justice he he is a revealer of God that's his role notice his following in verse 14 and the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen white and pure were following him on white horses his following a victorious and faithful through the conquering

Christ is described as the armies of heaven is not quite clear again if these are angelic beings! or redeemed people of the ages whether it's a combination of angelic being or redeemed people from humanity but yet scripture does speak about this end time role of angels where in Matthew chapter 25 verse 31 says when the son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him then he will sit on his glorious throne again the angels do have a role in end time judgment kinds of thing notice his weapon and his rule in verse 15 and from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the almighty his weapon and rule effectiveness and they are severe his rule is a severe rule his weapons and the nature of his rule his weapons are not conventional weapons of from seas or arrows are not shot from bows but cannot the one who birthed the world with his word quell the rebellion of man with his word his omnipotent word is his weapon and the nation of the world and their rulers will be struck down by them what a composite picture that we see and you say well what's in that composite picture and what might it have to do with the saints because it is a vision of future judgment well if you were

John cheers would have heard this but also in hearing this composite of Christ they would have heard some of the very things that he was spoken of and revealed at in Revelation chapters 1 through 3 which were specific to the churches and in hearing them they would have been reminded

of not just his future role in these particular things but his present role in them as a matter of fact the one who will judge the world in the future is the one who judges his church now and again and again if you look particularly look in Revelation chapter 1 and verses 12 through 16 was not Christ revealed at the very first part of Revelation as the judge who is walking in the midst of his churches in similar ways that he is revealed as judge who will come with retribution for those who have not submitted unto him look at verse 12 in chapter 1 it says then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me and on turning

[27 : 39] I saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man clothed in a long robe and a golden sash around his chest the hairs of his head were white like wool and white as snow his eyes what are they they are like a flame of fire we saw that in 19 didn't we his feet were like burnished bronze refined in the furnace and his voice was like the roar of many waters and again as we go through these first three chapters in similar ways as he is revealed in coming judgment he is in the same way a judge in the midst of his church on earth John readers would have made the connections in why Christ and how he's revealed their warnings even in Revelation chapter 19 to the church then and to the church now he's revealed himself as faithful and true to the church trustworthy to the church and so he will reveal himself to the world the one who will so gloriously and powerfully reveal himself to the world is judge and the future reveals himself similarly to the church he revealed himself as the one with eyes of flame and fire we saw that in chapter 1 verse 14 but also in chapter 2 verse 18 the one who will conquer the enemies of

God and the church is the one who has triumphed over unseen powers chapter 3 verse 21 he triumphed he conquered them Christ is coming as conqueror and the church needs to hear that kind of warning even now the first part we see the conquering Christ but then in verses 17 through 21 we see the vision of the conquest of Christ a description of those that he conquers verse 17 includes the second dinner or the supper invitation of the chapter the first look at it again in chapter 19 and verse 9 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 we see a different kind of supper here in verse 17 the first is an invitation to the marriage supper of the lamb!

interesting he's not mentioned in that particular way but guess who's coming to dinner here the invitation is in verse 17 is strange for several reasons the birds of prey get the invitation the menu is strange it's usually people eating birds but here it's birds at dinner and people are on the menu all classes of people important and unimportant!

angels standing in the sun and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead come gather for the great supper of God to eat the flesh of kings the flesh of captains the flesh of mighty men the flesh of horses and the riders and the flesh of all men both free and slave both great and small and notice the great enemies of God the agents of Satan on earth speaking of worldly power godless worldly power and philosophical and religious support for that godly power the false prophet there the beast and the kings of the earth and I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered together to make war with him who was sitting on the horse and against his army and the beast was captured and with him the false prophet who was in his presence and had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image that's who were being conquered by

Christ we saw this in chapter 16 we won't turn to it but what's going on here the defeat of these God defying world powers and their followers that's what's in view and just as we means several things again could have gone through the ears of John's hearers they would have seen the fate of the enemies of Christ and that there would be a day in which all rebellion and opposition would be put down

[32 : 55] God defying rule put down and all who supported that will one day answer to God judgment would be their lot that is what John is showing them but in the process not only were there the faithfulness of the enemies of Christ there was to be the faithfulness of the church of Christ there was a measure of comfort in hearing that Christ's enemies the enemies of the church are going to be dealt with but also in their own hearts and their minds they should be sensitive enough to recognize that the also the judge who was in the midst of his church who revealed himself in ways that demanded allegiance of the people of God both then and now oh it's sort of like when we were children when it was time for punishment to be met out and you know sometimes

I was the one being chastised other times it was the brothers and when I could hear my brother being chastised guess what that calls me to do sort of straighten up my act if I knew that

punishment was on target and someone was receiving that that had a somewhat of a fear or sanctifying effect at least for a little while before so that that would help me to be in line and again even as we see that judgment awaits the world the Bible speaks about judgment beginning at the house of God what should that mean for you and me huh the word of the Lord to the rebellious peoples of the world it's also the word of the Lord to his church now this is the person whose rule that you and I should want in our lives today as a matter of fact just think what would happen in our world if this person this conquering

Christ would show up now it would be no more business as usual wrongs would be made right truth would prevail the systems of this world would be judged with this one resides the very potential for a new world order in him in this person that we see in this composite picture the one that we see the kind of person that you and I should long to be under his rule and under his authority now he is the altogether lovely one and he is the one that will demand that the world submit it to him but he calls you and me to the kind of submission to the kind of person that we see here that's the call of this passage to you and me the!

rebellious and proud rulers and those who follow them will suffer the fate that we see but the message to you and me this afternoon is do not wait to be conquered by him but we must find ourselves submitting to him now we are to place ourselves under the rule of the very one that we see pictured in this passage as a matter of fact there is a great psalm that speaks of that turn with me to psalm chapter 2 because what we see here is an actual fulfillment of that where the authorities of this world will submit to Jesus the Christ look at psalm chapter 2 and verse 10 even as I wrap it up on this afternoon now therefore all kings all rulers be wise be warned all rulers of the earth serve the

Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way for his wrath is quickly kindled and blessed are those who find or who take their refuge in him blessed are those who do it now have you found your refuge in him do you find yourself under the rule under the authority of Christ and if you have done so do you demonstrate that that you're in fact under his righteous rule now so that others can be attracted to him what's the call to us today from this passage even as we anticipate the future judgment of Christ the call to you and me is to seek the son this one who is so marvelously wondrously and mysteriously depicted in this passage the call is to seek him the call is to serve the son the call is to submit the son and those who do so now will find that they indeed are blessed in the son blessed are all who take refuge in him even now a vision of the conquering

[38 : 35] Christ a vision of the conquest of Christ a call to submit to Christ even in all of his righteousness and glory that's a call to you and me it's called to the church he's revealed in similar ways as we have seen him in revelation 19 he reveals himself revelation chapters 1 through 3 to his church today and now may we see him in that way and may we submit and be faithful to him is my prayer won't you bow your head with me this afternoon oh our God praise you for a very implicit call to the church even as we look on future judgment your conquest of this world may we be found as those who are submitting to you now may we recognize your lordship your kingship your trustworthiness your revelation of the father your redemptive work your glorious following your mystery of who you are lord may these not simply be hollow truths in our ears but may that be the kind of life shaping and heart impacting truth that we find ourselves submitting to and oh lord Jesus we praise you even on this afternoon that in your first coming your mission you came from heaven to earth to show the way and you have been exalted and you are there for us in the very presence of the father before the throne of God waiting until that day that you return where your enemy indeed will become your footstool and may we Lord see you there as our great high priest appearing in the very presence of God our righteousness our acceptable sacrifice and may we celebrate you accordingly even now in your role as high priests awaiting to come as Christ the conqueror Lord we bless you this afternoon and give you praise and give ourselves to you what we submit to you we love you bless your name amen let's stand and sing together!