

Behold the Second Coming of Christ

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Preacher: Mike Salvati

[0:00] If you want to open up your Bibles to Revelation 19, 11 through 21. It was so sweet singing with you all this morning.

Man, that was good. Hey, it is mid-May. We are entering wedding season. Woo! I know at least one couple are going to be getting married here pretty soon.

And it's not infrequent to have weddings in this room. But imagine that this coming June, you've been invited to a wedding. And it turns out it is the most unusual wedding you've ever been to. You get there at 1245. Get here because it's a 1 o'clock sharp wedding. You take your seat. Let's say you're on the groom side. You know the groom. 1 o'clock sharp.

The families are seated. And then the procession of the wedding party takes place. And so you have groomsmen in tuxes and bridesmaids. And the matching kind of bow ties and cummerbunds with the whole dress.

[1:09] The whole thing looks great. And so they come down. And here's the preacher standing right here. And they come down. They take their sides and form the wings. And it's really cool. And then this is where things get unusual.

Because usually the groom is out at this point. But there's no groom. And the preacher seemingly completely ignorant of that says, All rise.

Which is everybody's cue to stand up and turn and look back at that door right there. Because when that door opens, you're going to see the bride. And holding on to her is her father.

And it's exactly what happens. And the dad walks his bride down the aisle. And her dress is spectacular white. Of the finest linen, pure and bright.

And the father walks the bride down to the preacher. And then the preacher says this. He asks, Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

[2:15] This, wait. Wait. And at that moment, while everyone is still standing, from the back door comes a sound.

Clip-clop. Clip-clop. And at that moment, the groom makes his entrance. And he steals the show. Last week, Billy preached a wonderful sermon that showed us the marriage supper of the Lamb. That day that every Christian is longing for.

To be reunited in person with our risen King, Jesus. And this morning, I get to show you the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus. It is his return. It's known as his second coming. It's the appearing of the Son of Man. It's what we were just singing about when we were singing, How does it go?

[3:26] And all will be made right when you appear. In Revelation 19, 7 through 9, we are given a picture of the bride at the altar, waiting for her groom, dressed in white, pure, pure, and bright.

But we're not given a picture of the groom. That's why 19:11 through 21 is here. The groom makes his entrance and he steals the show.

So, this morning, I get to point you to the second coming of Jesus and I'm guessing there's going to be three responses in the room. Some of you, your hearts are going to drop because you're going to be like, Oh no, he is coming.

Some of you are going to have your hearts, it's going to be like this. You're going to be like, Nah, it can wait. you'll have an indifferent response. But others of you, hopefully most of you, your hearts are going to rise.

When you see the descriptions of the risen, returning Jesus, your heart is going to rise and you're going to be saying, Oh yes, don't stop, keep telling me about that.

[4:54] You see, the doctrine of the return of Jesus, it is essential to the testimony of Jesus. And the doctrine of the return of Jesus is a prophecy of Jesus.

And so here we see the fulfillment of it and it's glorious. Jesus himself talked multiple times about that.

He will come back. In 2531, he says, When the Son of Man comes in his glory, you have at the end of Matthew parable after parable of the coming of Jesus Christ.

So this morning, may your heart rise at the sight of the coming of your long-awaited bridegroom, Jesus.

And here's the point. When Jesus comes back, when he bodily comes back for all to see, he will come in unrivaled glory to utterly destroy all of his rivals in an uncontested victory.

[6:07] Unrivaled glory, uncontested victory, we see that in Revelation 19, 11 through 21, 11 through 16, you see his unrivaled glory, and in 17 through 21, you see his uncontested victory.

And brothers and sisters, let your heart rise to it. So let's look at this together. Let's see this unrivaled glory at his glorious coming in verses 11 through 16.

Robin, thanks again for reading. Let me just point you to several things in these few verses. In verse 11, we see John says, Then I saw heaven opened.

When you read of heaven opening, it is this clue that there is a vision at foot. Heaven's perspective. And we're told, Behold, a white horse. A white horse would have pinged every reader in the first century.

[7:23] They know exactly what's being talked about. Because Roman generals and emperors in the first century, after a military conquest, they would enter Rome riding a white horse.

It's a symbol of victory. But on this white horse, you don't have a Roman general or emperor. On this white horse, you have the bridegroom.

And what follows in 11 through 13, just these few verses are seven descriptions of the rider on the white horse.

You ready? You ready for your hearts to rise? Are you ready to see your unrivaled king? The first thing we notice in verse 11, this first description is actually a name.

It's the name faithful and true. The one sitting on the horse is called faithful and true. Faithful means trustworthy. True means the real thing.

[8:27] And that is in direct contrast to the beast who is anything but faithful and anything but true. He sits on a throne of lies. This one riding on this white horse is faithful and true to all of his promises.

He's faithful and true to this one great promise of when the Son of Man comes in His glory, here He is coming in His glory. He's faithful and true to His bride, unlike the beast, who kills His lady, the prostitute.

He's faithful and true to His Father. The second description is in verse 11 too. In righteousness He judges and makes war.

Because this rider is faithful and true, no one can say at His judgment or when He makes war that these things are unjust. Have you heard of just war theory?

He is the personification of just war theory. All that He does is completely right. So the judgment and the war that He's bringing with Him, He is the divine warrior coming.

[9:39] No one can say that it's wrong. No one can say this is unfair. In righteousness He makes war and judges.

Verse 12, we see the third description. His eyes are like a flame of fire. We came across these fire eyes early in the book of Revelation in chapter 1 verse 15 where the risen, reigning, and radiant Christ is pictured with these fire eyes.

And then in the church of Thyatira in 2.18, again you see the fire eyes and He knows everything. Those eyes. Those eyes see all with a burning purity.

He is looking right now into the depths of your soul. verse 12, the fourth description, on His head are many diadems.

A diadem is just another way of talking about a crown. And we've come into contact with crowns in the book of Revelation earlier. It's just interesting whose head they're on.

[10:40] For example, in 12.3, on the head of the dragon are seven diadems. And in 13, verse 1, on the beast's seven heads are ten diadems.

So, what is a diadem? Well, it's a crown and what it represents is a domain. An area or a people of reign.

And if you remember from our study of the book of Revelation, seven and even ten have this, carry this sense of completeness. And so, the dragon and the beast are making these false claims just by their diadems that they rule over all.

Have you ever seen a boxer, a championship boxer enter a ring? He's got his belt on and if he's like the welterweight champion of this federation and this continent and he has other belts with him too, his entourage following are usually carrying the belts.

And so, he gets into the ring and he's like, yeah! And all of his entourage are like, yeah, yeah, yeah! He reigns, man! These aren't boxing belts, these are diadems.

[12:00] Crowns that represent domains over people and places. Did you notice how many diadems are on the rider of the horse?

Many. You can like, and miss it. Unnumbered. They're not numbered.

You're left thinking, how many? Too many to count? More than seven. More than ten. Rightful claim.

Crown him with many crowns, the one who's on his horse. He has the diadem of the United States of America.

He has a crown, a diadem that says Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere. Our solar system, our universe, all the micro, many universes.

[13:07] He even has a diadem with your name on it. rule over your life. The fifth description is actually the second name.

He has a name that no one knows but himself in verse 12. What does that mean? Well, it means two things. First is this.

There are things about our warrior bridegroom, the divine warrior, that we just cannot comprehend. He is an unfolding mystery to us.

Unfathomable. It's not that we can't know him. We can know him truly. We will just never know him exhaustively. So, if you think your idea of heaven is showing up and you're like, I'm bored with Jesus, it's way beyond that.

He's unfathomable. You're not going to get bored with him. And if you're bored with Jesus now, that means it just says more about you than about Jesus.

[14:23] Jesus. There's also, at this time, when this was written, an ancient belief that if you knew the name of a God, you were able to control that God.

And so, here's what that getting at. Jesus says, there's parts of me you don't know anything about. You can't control me. He's sovereign.

He does what he pleases. He's sovereign overall. There's nobody in the room that can control Jesus. Nobody on the planet that can control Jesus.

In Psalm 115, we read, our God is in the heavens. He does all that he pleases. And when Jesus comes back to earth, he will do all that he pleases on earth. There's no created thing that can control him, that can command him, that can constrain him.

He has a name that no one knows but himself. The sixth description. Verse 13, he has a robe dipped in blood. He's clothed in it.

[15:29] It's a reference back to Isaiah 63, one through six, where the Messiah will tread upon his enemies in the winepress of God's wrath. It's a picture of coming judgment. You've heard of a mullet before, right?

All business in the front, party in the back. Jesus is all business. He's got a robe dipped in blood, and you're going to see that robe in just a second.

It's going to come back on the scene. The seventh description is the third name in verse 13. It's the third of four names we see in this whole passage.

The third name is the word of God. You've heard that before from something John has written in John 1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

He was in the beginning with God, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld his glory. You see, Jesus is the living explanation of God on earth.

[16:31] His life shows us God. He is God. But remember, this passage has to do with his return and final judgment. So here's what that means.

His first coming was love incarnate. His second coming is judgment incarnate. This word is the final word of God. The final word of incarnate judgment writing on a white war horse.

Is your heart rising to any of these? You take all these seven descriptions together, and there are seven. And it's a picture of the unrivaled glory of the returning Christ full and complete.

Let your heart rise to that. That's not all we see here. It's not just we see his, these descriptions of who he is.

We see somebody coming with him. Not just as unrivaled glory, he has with him an unarmed army. Did you see that in verse 14? And the armies of heaven arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

[17:56] Who are these people? Well, the dead giveaway is in what they're wearing. They're arrayed in fine linen, white and pure. And if you look back at 1908, when Billy preached last week in this description of the bride, it was granted her, it's all grace, to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure.

It's the church. It's us. It's us. Riding on horses behind our Savior. Riding into the great final battle of Armageddon.

It's us. But let me tell you something. This linen that we're wearing, it's kind of like satiny silk, beautiful.

I mean, it's like PJs. It's like you're wearing pajamas. It's lovely, breezy, loose, wonderful. Why is an army wearing PJs into battle?

I think it's a good question. Why are they wearing armor? Why are they brandishing swords?

[19:12] They have no fear. You're going to see in just a minute that they're lined up against them as the beast and the armies of the earth.

Why aren't they afraid? Because they're following faithful and true, the one whose name he alone knows. They're following the word, the final word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He's going to fight the battle. He's going to fight and he's already won. He's already conquered at the cross and so we will ride out with him to watch him consummate the victory that he won at Calvary.

We're not going to be there to help him. We're going to be there to witness it. All of us who are crying out, how long, oh Lord? How long?

How long until you vindicate us? This is it. And you'll have a front row seat on a horse. Can you imagine yourself riding out on one of these white stallions following after your risen, radiant, and king who has returned?

[20:38] This week I have been imagining that very thing and many of you have come into my mind as I look left and right. Who is on these white horses wearing their PJs with me?

following after our great king. He's won the victory and he will complete it.

When we ride out together, we're riding out as those who know we have faithfully endured for Jesus and we will then witness his uncontested victory over all of his rivals.

So we've seen his coming in unrivaled glory. Now we've seen his coming with his unarmed army and PJs. And now I just want to quickly show you that when he comes, he's bringing universal judgment.

It's in verses 15 and 11. Excuse me, 15 and 16. Notice, in verse 15, the instruments of judgment from his mouth come a sharp sword to strike down the nations.

[21:48] It's a reference to Isaiah 11, 4. It's a prophecy of the Messiah coming to conquer. Jesus fulfills that.

Verse 15, he will rule the nations with a rod of iron in his hand. Behind that is Psalm 2, 9, another messianic psalm. The Messiah, God's king, will be victorious over the nations that oppose him.

And then, he will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. That's his feet.

Mouth, hand, feet, sword, rod, winepress.

The winepress, as I mentioned earlier, is, the background is Isaiah 63, 1 through 6. And again, it's the Messiah treading upon the winepress of God. And the blood of the enemies of God flow.

It's a picture of crushing. The Messiah, when he comes, he comes back to violently judge and conquer his enemies in righteousness.

[22:59] Those three instruments, sword, rod, winepress, should remind you of three words. Vengeance is mine.

wine. This is God vindicating himself and us on that great and awful day.

What gives him the right? What gives Jesus the right to this kind of business? verse 16 where we see the fourth name of this rider.

It's a reference back to the robe, the robe dipped with blood. It's pulled back and you can see on the thigh of this rider, King of kings and Lord of lords.

The title of universal authority over all. And you might be asking, well, why is it on his thigh? If you were standing on the ground and the returned Christ came riding up to you on his war horse, do you know where your eyes would fall?

[24:14] On his thigh. He'd be mounted over you. King of kings and Lord of lords.

It's not the first time we saw this title. It shows up in 1714 when the beast comes out to make war against the lamb. We learn that the lamb will conquer them for he is Lord of lords and king of kings and those with him are the called, the chosen, the faithful, us.

He wears all the diadems. He is all authority and he will exercise it completely when he comes. Are you seeing his unrivaled glory?

No one's like him. We've seen his coming glory. We've seen his coming army. We've seen his coming judgment.

We've seen these four names, faithful and true, true, a name that only he knows, the word of God, king of kings and lord of lords. We're going to come back to those names at the end of the sermon.

[25:29] But now, I've got to show you his uncontested victory over all of his rivals. We've seen his unrivaled glory. Now, let's look at his uncontested victory over all of his enemies.

Verses 17 through 21. These five verses, they picture that great and final battle of Armageddon that we read about already in chapter 16 under the sixth bowl judgment.

But what's interesting about this is that this passage portrays that battle as a supper. Verse 17, the great supper of God.

the great day of God's wrath has come, 616. And last week, Billy showed us that the marriage supper of the Lamb, blessed are those who are invited to that supper to be reunited with the Lamb. Not so with this supper. This isn't a blessed supper. This is a supper of the cursed. In 17 and 18, we see an angelic invitation to the supper.

[26:47] Verse 17, an angel. Who does the inviting? An angel, a great angel, standing in the sun high up, so you'd be like squinting. In a great voice, he throws out an invitation.

Who does he invite? Verse 17, a great come. All the birds that fly directly overhead, come.

Gather for the great supper of God. The guests at this supper are not people, they're birds, and not just any birds. Vultures.

Do you know what a turkey vulture is? Those bald-headed beasts, they survive by eating roadkill?

These vultures are being called not to eat roadkill, but war kill.

It's gruesome. It's not stated explicitly in this text, but we know from 1616 where this supper is going to take place.

[28:03] It's in Armageddon. And here's the gruesome punchline of this whole picture. It's what's the main course.

It's not what's being served, it's who's being served. Did you notice that when Robin read? Look at verse 18. They're being summoned to this great supper of God to eat the flesh of kings, to eat the flesh of captains, to eat the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and the riders.

And then it goes really broad, the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great. All humanity in opposition to God is the main course at the great supper of God.

It's a serious business. They ride out to Armageddon actually thinking that they have a shot against the lamb, but what all heaven knows is that there is no contest here, that these rebels opposing the lamb, this is the meal arriving.

They it's gruesome, it's sobering, and what I just need to say, what it is not, this is not the blessed marriage supper of the lamb, this is the anti-supper, the cursed supper of judgment on the beast and all with him.

[29:54] It's very sobering, this angelic invitation goes out to gather vultures for a feast of human war kill. He's coming in its serious business.

We see the invitation in 17 and 18 and then we see the supper served up in 19. In 19, the beast and the kings of the earth line up to make war against the one sitting on the horse.

You see this in 1616 and 1714, this squaring off with the lamb, faithful and true. The one whose name that only he knows because you can't control him.

He's the final word, the king of kings and the lord of lords. They have no idea who they're squaring up against. They must be out of their minds. They've been terribly deceived.

Their wicked hearts have been deceived by the beast on his throne of lies and his false prophet who has been spinning these lies to cause these wicked human beings to actually think that the beast is their savior.

[31:10] And we're watching this knowing that this battle for these armies is a fool's errand.

Take a last look. That's their end. They don't go beyond Armageddon. Verse 20, the best word I can use for this verse is anticlimactic.

You come off verse 19 and you have these two armies squaring off against each other and you're like thinking, oh man, this is going to be a fight. This is going to be like two towers kind of battle.

But there's no battle. There are no clanging swords, no arrows flying. I mean, we're in our PJs.

There's no conflict.

There's no 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.

[32:23] I mean, it's so anticlimactic. His final, the final victory of the returning king is so uncontested.

It is anticlimactic. historic. You just don't get the sense that he breaks a sweat. He is the king of kings and lord of lords.

He's got all the diadems. With his word, Martin Luther, with one, just one word, he shall fell him. the beast and the false prophet, the second and third members of the anti-trinity are easily captured. No fight.

They are thrown alive into hell, the lake of fire, where they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever. We read that in Revelation 20. What's interesting is that the order in which the enemies of God first appear in the book of Revelation are reversed in their destruction.

[33:30] Let me show you. In chapter 13, the rising of the dragon, actually the falling and throwing down of the dragon. In chapters 14, we see both the beast and the false prophet introduced.

In chapter 17, it's the prostitute. Chapter 18, it's the downfall of the prostitute. Chapter 19, it's the downfall of the false prophet and the beast. In chapter 20, we will see in just a couple weeks the devil, the dragon himself, gets hip tossed into the lake of fire.

The risen, radiant Christ returns in his unrivaled glory to bring utter destruction on all his rivals in an uncontested victory.

Supper is served. All remaining humanity in verse 21, stripped of beast and false prophet. They're slain by the sword that comes from his mouth. With just one word out of the mouth of faithful and true, out of the final word of God, king of kings and lord of lords, they're all undone.

We don't even enter the fray. We're there to witness. And one of those gruesome, gruesome pictures at the end of 21 and all those vultures, they ate until they could eat no more of flesh, of the flesh of Christ's rivals.

[35:12] That's a dishonorable death. Gruesome. sobering, but settling.

This victory is secure. In 11 through 16, we've seen the unrivaled glory of the returning Christ and in 17-21, we see his uncontested victory.

The point of all this is that when Christ returns as he promised he would, he will come in unrivaled glory to carry out an uncontested victory.

Now the question becomes how do you respond to that? Three heart responses. The first one I can imagine is this, your heart drops. You're in your seat right now saying, oh no, I'm on the wrong side of the rider.

I'm on the wrong side of the battle line. I've been living a life in opposition to him because you know that his fire eyes see right through you.

[36:25] There's nothing hidden from his sight. You know that if he came back today on the clouds, you would, Revelation 17, wail with the rest of the nations of the earth.

Judgment has come. It's real guilt. You've really sinned. You've really disobeyed God. You're not making it up.

It's true. And you're accountable. And it can result in fear. You're heart dropping. Well, I've got really good news for you, fearful one.

Did you know that you don't have to fear the coming of the rider on the white horse? You can actually welcome it? How so, you say?

How can I welcome that dread warrior? Well, the rider of the white horse, he's faithful and true.

[37:25] He's got an unknown name that only he knows. He's the final word of God. He's the king of kings and lord of lords. But he's also the lamb who was slain. And he was slain for you.

he shed his blood that you could be delivered. This rider, he's coming in glory the second time. But the first time he came, he came full of grace to rescue sinners from their sin through his blood. What your fear is showing is that you're actually in need of his grace, of his forgiveness, of his rescue.

So you go to him. You confess to him that you've been opposed to him, that you've been disobeying him, and he has promised to forgive you and wash you clean to give you a new set of clothes, fine linen, pure and bright.

So run to him today, fearful one. You don't need to be afraid anymore. But there's another group of people here this morning that your heart's not dropping, your heart's indifferent.

[38:44] You're thinking things like this, oh that can wait. I don't need to make a decision about Jesus. When confronted with these glorious truths about the final appearing of the Son of Man, you're like, eh, that's nice.

It's because you're on the fence. You see the two options before you, you see that the way that leads to destruction is the way that's being waved on by the false prophet, excuse me, the false, the great prostitute.

She's saying to you, come and enjoy my delights. And you and your heart are thinking things like this. Oh man, I'm not sure if I want to give that up. I really like her delights.

But you also know the way that leads to life and that's through the lamb. And in order to bear his name, in order to follow after him on a horse, you need to forsake the world.

You must hand over the diadem with your name on it. That's the rule of your life. and you hand it over to the lamb and says, I'm all yours.

[40:01] You know that's the case. You're on the fence between living for Babylon and living for the lamb. You're wondering, is he worth it?

Well, if you're a fence rider, you're making a tragic mistake. You think that the temporary delights of Babylon are more wonderful than the eternal glory of following Jesus.

So just to bring this home to you, let me ask you a question from the text. You tell me, in this text, when the risen Christ returns, who's experiencing the greatest joy in that moment?

those who are following after the risen, reigning, and returning king on their white steeds, or those who are on the other side of the battle line, whom the risen king is coming to judge, on that day whose heart is full of joy.

life. If Jesus were to come back today, and he found you on the fence, you would find yourself under his judgment, but you still have time.

[41:24] You just need to go tell the risen lamb, you've been indifferent, you've been unwilling to hand him over your diadem, and then you do that in faith.

you don't know what tomorrow holds. There's a third group of people here. It's not people's hearts falling with oh no, it's not people with indifferent hearts saying oh that can wait, it's the blood bought. Your hearts rise, you say oh yes, you hear about these wonderful descriptions of the son of man in his final coming, and you're like yes, yes and amen.

Every name you hear, it puts strength in your heart. His coming doesn't frighten you. His uncontested victory sobers you, but it doesn't frighten you.

You long for him. You see yourself on a white charger riding behind our warrior king. it's not a hard thing to imagine in light of what he's done for you.

[42:36] So this morning, if your heart is rising, be encouraged. He is coming and we're one day closer to his coming.

Don't give up. Don't compromise. Stay focused. Stay true. Be faithful. But I've been around the block, so I know that someone who gets encouraged on a Sunday can, on Monday, find themselves greatly discouraged.

So this week, I want to put something before you. A way to remain strong this week. To be encouraged by the promised second coming of Jesus.

And here's how I want to do it. It's all in the names. Pray his unrivaled names to him this week. Pray them. All week long, this past week, I've been addressing our Lord Jesus with these lovely names. And it has put strength in my heart. It goes something like this. Oh Lord Jesus, you are faithful and true. You will not go. You will not go back on your promises against me.

[43:49] You will never leave me nor forsake me. You will be true to your word. All the way to the end, you are faithful and true. Do you think you can do that this week? And then there's the name that only he knows.

Pray this. Oh, Jesus, I can't comprehend you fully, but I can know you truly. Would you show me your glory? Would you reveal yourself to me in ways I can know?

And I dare not try to control you or to command you or to constrain you because you're uncontrollable. Do you think you can do that? Do you think that's going to put strength in your heart when you pray to him like that?

The word of God. Oh, Jesus, you are the word of God, the logos of God. Thank you for revealing yourself to me. Thank you for giving me eyes to see. Thank you for showing me that you are my salvation.

and I fear not the sword of your mouth because you willingly bore God's judgment for me already and I look forward to that day. Do you think you can pray that?

[45:01] King of kings and Lord of lords, I submit myself to you.

Vengeance is yours, not mine. I trust that to you and I also entrust all of who I am to you.

With the diadem of my life, today you have dominion over all of who I am. You can do that.

Imagine you're at the most unusual wedding this June. The bride is entered and the preacher has just asked who gives this woman to be married to this man and from the back of the sanctuary with everyone standing up, you start hearing this clip-clop, clip-clop.

The groom has made his entrance. He's riding his white stallion through those doors, coming down this aisle and he's not wearing a tuxedo, he's wearing his marine dress blues with a chest full of medals and as he slowly walks down this aisle, everyone standing in the room is just reading what's written on his thigh.

This morning we've looked at the return of our king, our bridegroom, the return of the divine warrior, unrivaled in his glory and uncontested in his victory.

[46:37] let that sit in your heart and rise. He is worthy.

Let us pray. God, thank you so much for Revelation 19, 11 through 21. Would you impress these great truths into our hearts and may our response be pleasing to you.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.