

Monday, March 23, 2026

Revelation 19:16

We read today from Revelation 19:16. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What can we learn today from the light of God's word to us?

Sometimes, when we come into a devotional space, we're calm, rested, and prepared to listen to the Spirit. Other times, we are harried, stressed, over-scheduled, and ill-equipped to hear God's voice. In either case, allow the next few minutes to be time where you focus on breathing, posture, and clearing your mind of the things of the world. Allow the rhythm of your breath to tune you into the Spirit's voice as you prepare to engage with the Word.

"Christ is King." We regularly say this phrase in this season because of what we will celebrate this coming weekend. Palm Sunday affirms the words of those who spread their cloaks and waved the palm branches as Christ entered Jerusalem.

"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!"

The kingship of Christ was promised to the people of Israel centuries before in the messianic prophecies in passages from Isaiah 40 and later in Isaiah 62 and the following chapters. The Father promises that his power will be shown to his people in a man who will come to rule. That man is Jesus.

And we love the image of Christ as king do we not? We love to consider him a benevolent ruler who brings peace and harmony to his people. He carries the glory of the Father among the redeemed, and we will be overwhelmed by what we see in the throne room of God.

But when we are focused solely on the benevolence of Christ as King, we miss something that is so important about him as ruler over ALL things.

His rule is one always marked by love, but while we love seeing that love come in the mercy of Christ, we can quickly forget that his love will also express the justice of Christ.

"Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty."

The book of Revelation moves us to understand Christ's kingship as one which brings God's full glory to the new heavens and the new earth. God's glory is fully made known as the curse of sin that comes to Creation in Genesis 3 is reversed. Christ's work as king in this part of the story is to remove the power and consequence of sin from all of Creation. Sin is a barrier to God's glory. Sin may not be present with his holiness.

Christ the king carries out the justice of God against sin and those who are clothed with its filth. Oof. It's not a pretty picture.

The winepress of God's fury against sin runs red with the blood of the guilty. The harvest of this judgment comes with the sharp sword that cuts down the guilty and the unrighteous. That is the work of the king. That is the work of the one who comes to "judge the living and the dead."

We might receive this image with fear and repulsion. Our fear might move us to recommit our lives to Jesus out of concern for never having to face such judgment. Our repulsion may encourage us to “think the happy thoughts” of Christ in his mercy and leave the justice imagery aside.

But maybe this difficult image can fuel us for more.

As we understand that the kingship of Christ ushers in God’s glory by ridding all the new heavens and the new earth of sin, we can be inspired towards the work of making disciples. We can look at our friends, family, neighbors and co-workers and love them enough to tell them more of Christ. We can pray that Christ equips us with the stories of his mercy so that they never need face the wrath of his justice against sin. We can share the love of Christ with them in such ways that the Spirit moves them to long for more of that love by longing for Jesus.

We can see Christ for who he fully is; the King of Kings and Lord of Lords come to bring both God’s justice and God’s mercy to all things for his glory.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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