

**8/21/22 The Glorious Return of Jesus Christ
Revelation 19:11-21**

Welcome...

This morning we come to Revelation 19:11-21 and the glorious return of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' first coming to earth was one of grace. His return will be a coming of glory. The first coming occurred in meekness, lowliness, and obscurity. The second will occur in power, radiance, and majesty. The first was surrounded by animals in a stable — as a baby, he was wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger. The second will be surrounded by the mighty armies of heaven. The first was a picture of infinite humility and poverty. The second will be a display of position and authority.

In His first coming Jesus was like a lamb. In the second, He will roar like a lion; rise up to defend and vindicate His people, His bride, and will rip apart His enemies with no mercy.

Let's read Revelation 19:11-21...

God's people throughout redemptive history have eagerly anticipated the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat His foes and set up His kingdom. With the glorious return of Jesus,

- 2 Samuel 7 says God will establish the throne of David's greater Son (Jesus Christ)
- Psalm 2 says the Son will rule the earth with a rod of iron
- Joel chapter 3 says the nations will be judged
- Zechariah 12 says the returning King will defeat His enemies and Jerusalem will become the center of Messiah's kingdom
- Matthew 25 says the angels will gather the unbelievers for judgment
- Revelation chapter 19 tells us that Jesus Christ will visibly, physically descend in great glory to judge and rule the world.

Main point: In our text we are provided a four-fold description of the glorious return of Jesus Christ and the battle of Armageddon.

His Promise Delivered – verse 11

His Power Displayed v. 12-16

His Plan Demonstrated v. 17-19

His Preeminence Decided v. 20-21

The question for you this morning is: How will the promise of His return effect your life and service for Christ today? My prayer is that this description of the Glorious Return of Christ in Revelation 19 will motivate you today to live and serve for His glory.

Now to set the context we need to remember that the book of Revelation has informed of this battle in earlier chapters. Why is there going to be a battle? Revelation 12:17 says, "the dragon [Satan] was enraged with the woman [Israel], and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

Look at Revelation 16:12-16 with me...

These deceptive demons of Satan trick people to assemble under the Antichrist to fight Jesus and His people. The Antichrist's worldwide kingdom is made up of lesser kings who give their power and their allegiance to him.

The Antichrist gives the order to his henchmen, the demons, to do supernatural deceiving signs and wonders. People are tricked and lured into gathering by these signs. Behind the scenes is the dragon, Satan. His bitter hatred for the people of God drives his desire for the genocide.

Throughout redemptive history, Satan has sought to slaughter the Jews. Now he has the chance to do it (so he thinks) especially because by now in Revelation 19 God has taken away the blindness from the hearts of the Jews. God will remove that veil that has hidden their eyes from seeing Christ the Messiah. Romans 11 says that He will take away the heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh, and they will turn and all Israel will be saved. Satan wants to exterminate them since they love Jesus and have found in him the Son of David, the Son of God.

In fact, Revelation 17 speaks of the kings of the earth and their desire to assemble and fight for the Antichrist in his efforts to wipe out all of God's people. Look at Revelation 17:12-14 with me...

And as they assemble to slaughter God's people in Armageddon, the heavens open and it is into this battle that Jesus comes back.

Revelation 19:11...The first point we see here is Christ's promise delivered.

I. His Promise Delivered

Verse 11 says, "I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True."

No longer is Jesus portrayed as He was when He entered Jerusalem, "humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). Instead, He rides a white horse like the horse ridden by victorious Roman generals in their triumphal processions through the streets of Rome.

When I was 10 years old my mother took me to my uncle's farm in Bogota, Colombia. One day our job was to round up some of the donkeys that were another pasture, and honestly, I was a bit afraid of getting kicked or bit by them. Those fears were relieved when I saw my uncle mount his huge thoroughbred horse. It was clear who had the upper hand.

Jesus comes as the commander-in-chief of the host of heaven on a white horse. White also symbolizes the spotless, unblemished, absolutely holy character of the Rider.

Continuing his description of the astonishing scene before him, John notes in verse 1 that He who sat on the white horse is called Faithful and True. There is no more appropriate name for the Lord Jesus Christ, who earlier in Revelation 3:14 was called "the faithful and true Witness."

He is faithful to His promises (2 Corinthians 1:20) and what He speaks is always true (John 8:45-46; Titus 1:2) There are many promises of the Second Coming. For every one Bible verse referring to Christ's first coming there are eight verses on His second coming. Too many prophecies and promises to read this morning, but let's consider a few that describe His glorious return.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:30 says, "At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory." It is a clear prediction of the Second Coming of Christ.

In Matthew 24:27 Jesus said, "...as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." He will come like lightning across the sky.

On August 16 of 2020 Paula and I were driving to see Marie in Davis, CA when there was an electrical storm such as I had never seen in my life. It is referred to as the August lightning siege. On August 16, 2020, when the first thunderstorms began, around 2,500 lightning strikes hit the Bay area, with 200 strikes happening in a 30-minute time span. Within the next 72–96 hours, over 12,000 lightning strikes were recorded over Northern California. These lightning strikes sparked 585 wildfires.

The lightning could not be missed, it was obvious, big, powerful and visible. As lightning that flashes in the east is visible in the west, so will be the return of Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 25:31-32 Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

Jesus predicted His glorious return during his trial before Annas and Caiaphas, the Jewish leaders who hated Him and had conspired to kill Him. They were ready to put Jesus to death, but the false witnesses could not coordinate their stories, frustrating the leaders. Finally, the high priest said, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus replied, "I Am" - which is God's name.

Jesus said to them in Matthew 26:64, referring to Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13, and says, "Nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." He was saying to the religious Jewish leaders, "Not only am I the Messiah and the Son of God, but one day you will see Me glorified with My Father in heaven and returning to earth as your Judge." Then the high priest tore his clothes..." The prediction of Christ's own second coming in glory is what condemned Jesus to death.

So, in Revelation 19:11, Jesus is depicted here as faithful and true. He promised He would return, and He will do it. Earlier Revelation 1:7 says, "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen."

Because Jesus is faithful to His word and righteous character, it follows at the end of Revelation 19:11, "and in righteousness He judges and wages war."

His holy nature demands a holy, righteous reaction to sin. And because He always does what He says, He must judge the wicked. In John 5:22 Jesus said, "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son."

Jesus came the first time as Savior; He will return as Judge. When He came the first time, wicked people, including Pilate, Herod, Annas, and Caiaphas judged Him; when Jesus returns, He will judge all wicked people (Acts 17:31). And He will not only be their judge, but Revelation 19 verses 15 and 21 tells us He will also be their executioner.

So, first we His Promise Delivered.

II. His Power Displayed in verses 12-16

Notice how verse 12 begins, "His eyes are a flame of fire." Nothing escapes the notice of Christ's piercing vision. The eyes of Christ that wept over the fate of unrepentant Jerusalem and over the sorrow, suffering, and death in this sin-cursed world, John now sees flashing with the fire of judgment.

On His head John notes in verse 12 “are many diadems,” a reference to a ruler’s crown. These are the crowns of royalty, the crowns of absolute, complete and total sovereignty. Today we sing All Hail the Power of Jesus Name. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all.

This image of the multi-crowned King Jesus inspired Matthew Bridges in 1852 to pen a majestic hymn that we sang last week: Crown Him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne: Hark! How the heav’nly anthem drowns All music but its own! Awake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee, And hail Him as thy matchless King Thru all eternity”

Verse 12 ends with ...

I thought a lot about that. My initial reaction is, “John, if Jesus has name which no one knows except Himself, then why did you tell us?”

Perhaps you have been told like I have on more than occasion by someone in the church, “Hey I was at this conference, and someone there knew you and said to say hello.” I ask, “Really? Who was it?” And they say, “I don’t remember, but they said to say hello.” I thought, “I don’t know what to do with that, but thank you.”

This verse may beg the question, “So why tell us?” But the reason is powerful. Jesus wants us to know that we do not know everything about Him. He has a name that He calls Himself which we know nothing about, though perhaps we will one day. You see in heaven we will be learning Jesus forever — we have much to learn about Him. He has other names given here in this very passage that He wants us to know, like King of kings and Lord of lords, and Word of God, but this name written on Him is not revealed.

Verse 13... Whenever we see blood on another’s garment, one question comes to mind: “Whose blood is it - yours or someone else’s?” In this case the blood-stained robe could symbolize the fact that Christ “tasted death” for everyone, having become the “Lamb that was slain” (5:12).

Or it may allude visually to Isaiah 63:2–4 which asks, “Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? The Lords answers, I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and My year of redemption has come.”

Because the context of Revelation 19 is clearly judgment, this second option is preferred. This meaning also matches the parallel scene in 14:9–11, 17–20 where John earlier alludes to Isaiah’s prophecy.

In other words, this scene portrays the awful Day of Judgment in the Battle of Armageddon in which Christ is seen victorious and with the blood of His enemies literally splattered all over His garments. It is so certain that the blood is described in verse 13 as already on Christ’s robe.

Verse 13 continues, “and His name is called The Word of God.” The “Word” has a rich meaning throughout the Old and New Testaments. It refers to God’s revelation, especially contained in Scripture (1 Samuel 9:27; Matthew 15:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

In the gospel of John, the apostle John began his account of Christ’s first coming by identifying Jesus as “the Word.” In John 1:1 John writes, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And then in John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”

So, when John calls Jesus “the Word of God,” he is presenting Jesus not only as a manifestation of God’s revelation, but a manifestation of God Himself, a title of deity. In His case, it’s a deity that is personally present, tangible. The “Word of God” is always “God with us,” Immanuel.

Verse 14...

Verse 14 reflects what we saw last week in verse 8, which is clearly a reference to the redeemed, the church. Believers clothed in the imputed righteousness of Christ and their righteous acts come “in fine linen, white and pure...following Him on white horses.”

Revelation 17:14 already identified this army in advance: “The Lamb will overcome them [the Beast and his armies], because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.” The phrase “called and chosen and faithful” refers to resurrected, glorified, and rewarded saints, who were raptured at the beginning of the seven-year tribulation. They had been preparing to take their seats in order to rule with Christ; hence they will descend with Christ as He executes the final judgment at Armageddon.

The New Testament book of Jude repeats the very first prophecy, uttered thousands of years earlier by Enoch, saying in Jude 14-15a that, “the Lord will come with many thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all.”

Don’t miss the observation in verse 14 that they (the church) are “following Him.” When we return with Christ, He will be out front. He will lead the way. We will not be participators in the battle, only spectators. King Jesus did not need our assistance or help when He came the first time to redeem sinners, and He will not need our assistance or help when He comes the second time to reign as Sovereign. Holy armies come with Him and are following Him. He fights the battle for us. He again wins the day on behalf of those who love and trust Him

Then in verse 15 John describes a sharp sword flying from Jesus’ mouth....

This sword indicates that Christ’s judgment on the wicked nations will not be conducted with physical weapons of mass destruction, but with the one sure spiritual weapon—the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). Just as the Word was the Father’s Agent in Creation (John 1:1–3), so the Word is His Agent for judgment and consummation.

Verse 15...

John actually makes reference to several Old Testament messianic passages in his description of the coming King. Psalm 2:9 identifies Christ as the Davidic king who will strike the wicked Gentile nations with a rod of iron. Isaiah 11:1, 4 elaborates on this psalm, associating the prophecy explicitly with the Messiah, the “stem of Jesse,” and demonstrating that the “rod” of judgment is supernatural, not physical: “He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.”

Isaiah 63:3 and Joel 3:13-14 are Old Testament prophecies of how the Messiah will judge His enemies when the wicked are gathered in the “valley of decision”—Armageddon—to be crushed in the winepress of God’s wrath.

What qualifies Jesus to exercise this kind of judgment? Verse 16...

The question is answered clearly by the final title of Jesus—a title so profound that it’s written on His robe and on his thigh: “King of kings and Lord of lords.” More than any other name for Christ in this vision, this famous title identifies Jesus as the supreme ruler over all the earth, along with God Almighty.

We have seen His Promise Delivered in verse 11. His Power Displayed v. 12-16 and

III. His Plan Demonstrated in v. 17-19.

Verses 17-19...

The apostle John sees in verse 17 an angel who cries in a “loud voice” to “all the birds,” the vultures “flying high overhead.” They are called to “Come, gather together for the great supper of God.” This supper is much different than the Marriage Supper of the Lamb we saw last week in 19:9. There the saints are called to come and celebrate with the Lord. Here sinners are called and condemned by the Lord for a “bird feast,” a vulture’s banquet where they are the main entrée. It is a great supper because all rebellious sinners on earth will be present. Try as they might, there is no escape.

There will be no discrimination. Everyone will participate in one of two eschatological feast: the righteous saints joining in the wedding supper of the Lamb or the wicked hardened sinners becoming the feast at the great supper of God.

Verse 18 tells us that God will judge the wicked from every social category (6:15; 13:16); social status or rank will not be enough to exempt the ungodly from judgment. A day of universal, righteous reckoning is coming. Everyone will be held accountable for their rejection of the Lamb.

Verse 19...

Behind the scenes, the dragon [Satan] and lying demons seem to be in control, but ultimately Satan, the demons, the Antichrist, the kings bringing their armies are not causing all to gather in one place. The real mover here is Almighty God, assembling all of Christ’s enemies into one place for that final battle.

Those who gather in the place called Armageddon think they will put an end to Israel to destroy the people of God, but God is actually gathering them for their own slaughter. This is predicted plainly in the book of Joel, which Adrian read. Nothing like Joel’s words of prophecy have yet been fulfilled in Israel’s history.

Joel 3:9, “Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near and let them come up. [The sixth bowl judgment in Revelation 16 dries up the Euphrates and sends out frog-like demons to gather the kings of the world.] Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, ‘I am a mighty man!’ [Still weak, but ready to fight.] Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations and gather there. Bring down your mighty ones, O LORD! [the armies of God in Revelation 19:14] ‘Let the nations be aroused; and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, [which means “the Lord judges”] for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side [See Revelation 14]. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the winepress is full; the vats overflow for their wickedness is great!’ Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness. The LORD roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people, a stronghold to the sons of Israel. ‘Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy; and strangers will pass through it no more.’”

Revelation 19 is exactly what Joel said would happen. The Euphrates River has parted to allow these kings of the East to assemble for their death. They are motivated by Satan’s hatred for God and His people. Antichrist is motivated by his own prideful rage that this remnant will not bow down to worship him; his arrogance reaches to heaven. They assemble in Palestine, assuming it will be an easy battle. It be a very easy battle, the easiest in history, but not the way they think. They are confident in their own victory because they will be fighting against a small number of people who have no military strength and will be easy to wipe out, so they believe.

We have seen Christ's Promise Delivered – verse 11
His Power Displayed v. 12-16
His Plan Demonstrated v. 17-19

IV. His Preeminence Decided

Verses 20-21...

Before anybody on earth can utter the word “Armageddon,” the battle will be over. So swift and complete is the defeat of this evil army that our text does not even describe it! It simply notes the results.

John Phillips describes it well:

“Then suddenly it will all be over. In fact, there will be no war at all, in the sense that we think of war. There will be just a word spoken from Him who sits astride the great white horse. Once Jesus spoke a word to a fig tree, and it withered away. Once He spoke a word to howling winds and heaving waves, and the storm clouds vanished and the waves fell still. Once He spoke to a legion of demons bursting at the seams of a poor man's soul, and instantly they fled. Now He speaks a word, and the war is over. The blasphemous, loud-mouthed Beast is stricken where he stands. The false prophet, the miracle-working windbag from the pit is punctured and still. The pair of them are bundled up and hurled headlong into the everlasting flames. Another word, and the panic-stricken armies reel and stagger and fall down dead. Field marshals and generals, admirals and air commanders, soldiers and sailors, rank and file, one and all—they fall. And the vultures descend and cover the scene. (Exploring Revelation, 236).”

Verse 20 tells us both the beast (the Antichrist) and false prophet are captured and thrown “alive into the lake of fire.” The phrase “lake of fire” is a reference to the final place of everlasting torment. Jesus Christ and other biblical writers described it, but this is the first time we actually read this title, “the lake of fire”. We will study this place later when we arrive at the end of Revelation chapter 20. The lake of fire will be mentioned four more times as Revelation comes to a conclusion. However, for now, we are told that the very first inhabitants of hell are the antichrist and the false prophet – the wonder-working, miracle-performing, deceiving duo who once deceived the majority of humankind. They become a horrifying prelude to the eternal wrath of God.

Revelation simply confirms the witness of Jesus (Matt. 13:40-42; 25:41-46; Mark 9:42-48), who said more about the reality of hell than anyone else in the Bible. Captured and condemned: those two words that describe the future of all who say no to God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ.

Three closing thoughts:

1. If you don't know Christ, now is the time of salvation.
2. Ponder the fact that in verse 12 Jesus has a name written on Him that only He knows. Eagerly anticipate the education we will receive in Heaven. Amazing Grace stanza, “When we've been there 10,000 years, bright, shining as the sun...” we will still have things to learn about Jesus.
3. Let us, as believers, be ready for the Second Coming. He has not told us exactly when it will happen. We must be ready for Him to come back all the time, to be busy doing what He wants us to do. To know Christ and make Him known by warning people who are not ready for His glorious return.