

The Return of King Jesus!

Revelation 19:11-20

Over the past few weeks, I've had lots of great discussions with many of you, talking about the book of Revelation. It's been really great to dialogue and wrestle with the meaning of scripture, and to discuss our understanding and how to apply what we read. And I really enjoy these conversations! When we're able to get together as brothers and sisters in Christ and talk about scripture and different viewpoints, if we're able to look based our own personal biases, what usually happens is that both parties are able to learn from each other- we kind of bump each other up in our understanding and knowledge; we end up both benefiting from the dialogue exchange. So as I often do, I want to invite you, if you have some questions, or are wrestling with anything- please schedule a time to dialogue with myself and/or Pastor Dave.

A subject that has come up recently that seems many have questions about is concerning the role the nation of Israel plays in the end times. And to be completely transparent, I'm not sure the Bible tells us exactly what the role of modern day Israel will look like as the events of Revelation unfold. We know God loves intimately the descendants of Abraham, that He has given the Jewish people favor time and time again even through the most difficult of circumstances. And there are verses referencing the end times, the "day of the Lord," verses mentioning: a return of those to the land of Israel coupled with a return to the Lord, there is mentioned wars, there is mentioned judgment, there is mentioned blindness being removed and salvation for a remnant, in conjunction with an eternal reign from the Messiah King- but these things aren't really mapped out in great detail, and the book of Revelation mostly steers clear of this subject, with exception to very clearly speaking about Jesus the Messiah returning to set up His eternal reign.

There are different theological views on this subject out there, but I'm going to mention the major two that seem to be causing a lot of division within churches throughout the United States, and I'm going to mention them both in their most extreme forms in order to give you a good idea of how broad the spectrum is on this subject. On one side there is Dispensationalism, a theological theory that there have been different "dispensations" over time- dispensations meaning divine time periods, in which history is divided up into- and God has dealt differently in relation to mankind with each dispensation. Along with this

understanding is the concept that Israel is a distinct separate entity from Christianity, always has been and always will be, and that Israel's pathway to salvation is different than everyone else's. The idea is that during the tribulation, God will return a focus to national Israel, and that when Jesus returns, He will rule from an earthly national throne in Israel, and He along with ethnic Jews will be the rulers of the new world, and Gentile Christians will get to serve in that earthly Kingdom.

Zionism is also often associated with those who hold to Dispensationalism. Zionism is defined as a political movement for the modern day nation state of Israel to rise in global, economic, military power and for the rest of the world to support them in the conquest of reclaiming their borders from the Nile River in Egypt to the Euphrates River in Iraq.

Now, on the other extreme side of the equation, there is a theological theory know as Replacement Theology, or Supersessionism. I know, these are all big words. Defenders of Replacement Theology say that the church has replaced, or superseded the Jewish people as God's chosen people, and that the church is now the primary recipient of the Old Testament covenant blessings. They would say that the Old Testament promises and prophecies that were directed to Israel have been fulfilled in Christ, and/or are now transferred on to the church who is now the "true" Israel, therefore, there is no longer any prophecies waiting to be fulfilled in regard to an earthly national Israel nation state.

Now again, I have described to you two extreme descriptions, there's probably not many of you who would say- "yeah, I'm definitely way over here, or I'm way over there," but there's a whole world out there of theories that are nuanced between these two extremes, and I think what often happens is that people leaning towards one understanding or the other can quickly put someone who differs slightly into the opposite extreme camp and then wrongfully assume that they believe something they really don't believe.

Personally, it seems to me that both extremes are racist- one seems to elevate Jewish ethnicity above everyone else and could lead people to being anti-gentile; the other seems to disregard the scriptural role of Abraham's descendants and could thus lead people to being anti-jew. How I'm personally trying to work through this current debate, and harmonize the Old Testament with

the New Testament is through attempting to focus my mindset more on just the coming Kingdom of Jesus. When we read through the Bible, it seems that Jesus and the Bible authors were not aligning themselves with a *Jewish* exclusivity, nor were they aligning themselves with a *Gentile* exclusivity, but rather they aligned themselves with a new identity that offered inclusivity of Jews and Gentiles- all nations- exclusively through Jesus. The Bible seems to present the Kingdom of Jesus as the end game, and there's not a whole lot of details listed as to how, or when, or what Israel or other countries will look like or function as, leading up to the day Jesus returns. Again, we read verses speaking of God's love and favor for those of Israel, we read of a return of people to the land of Israel and to the Lord, we read about judgement, wars, blindness being removed and the salvation of a remnant, an eternal kingdom reign of the Messiah- but along with that we also read clearly in Revelation that all the nations of the world will be toppled and that every land mass will be moved from it's place- so I'm attempting to concern myself less with the earthly kingdoms of this world that will all eventually get shaken up in the end- and just skip ahead to concentrate more on the end game final result of that eternal kingdom reign of the Messiah consisting of all the nations- Jews and Gentiles, who have made Jesus their King.

And on this coming Kingdom ushered in by Christ's return, is exactly where we will be focusing our attention today and in the weeks ahead in our study of the book of Revelation. Last week Pastor Dave brought us through verse **10 of chapter 19**- that verse ends with this statement from the angel of God, the angel says: *"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* Now, I don't know if we can be 100% sure what the angel meant in saying this, but it seems *maybe* the idea is that all the prophets- everything they said- their words were being given to them *by* Jesus, and were intended to point *to* Jesus. And after this statement, immediately John sees the Heavens open and Jesus appearing. Let's read the text, **verse 11-16...**

Here we're at the climax of the book of Revelation- probably even the climax of the whole New Testament, maybe even the climax point of the entire Bible. This conveys what so many Old Testament authors described and anticipated through their writings concerning the "Day of the Lord," when the Messiah eternal King would come with judgment for some and reward for others. This conveys what so many New Testament authors described and anticipated through their writings concerning Jesus returning, coming again, bringing about His Kingdom

rule. Now, it doesn't specifically say here that He will be rapturing up His bride the church at this event, so I'm totally open to that rapture event taking place beforehand, but the language seems to be consistent with the other New Testament verses that describe His descent from Heaven and us being gathered up to Him in that moment. But again, it doesn't say that specifically here- I think it's intentionally left as a bit of a mystery for us, a bit of a puzzle piece to which we have to find the other missing pieces.

Another mysterious subject that might come up as we're reading through these passages, is the subject of what happens immediately after one dies in this world. Christians have intensely debated this subject as well, some argue that the soul sleeps- in other words when you die you remain unconscious, and you don't "wake up" until this last day when Jesus returns and the dead rise. In this theory, for the one passing in death, they would wake up in Heaven and the transition would seem instant, but time would have passed in the transition. I personally would argue against that theory- the Bible isn't very detailed on this subject either, but we have some passages that seem to negate the idea of soul sleep. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord, but perhaps the strongest argument against soul sleep would be Luke 16, when Jesus tells the story of the rich man and poor Lazarus. And Jesus says they both died, and the rich man went to Hades- a place of torment, and Lazarus went to be with Abraham in a place of comfort. Now, what's interesting about the story is that it sounds like a story placed in real time, not a story that is referencing a future event, because Jesus says that the rich man calls out to Abraham across the divide between the 2 places and asks that Abraham would send Lazarus back to the world in order to warn the rich man's brothers. So Jesus isn't talking about the end days, end of world, future judgment when at that time it will be too late for someone to change their ways and receive eternal life- no, the story is placed in current time. This seems to be telling us that right now, Abraham is alive, and that there are people right now in a place of comfort, and others in a place of torment.

Again, the Bible doesn't give a whole lot of details- it's a bit mysterious, but perhaps the idea is that our spirit, or our soul- immediately upon death in this world goes to either Heaven or Hell to await these events of Revelation to unfold, and then at the return of Jesus- when that happens, our physical body is resurrected, transformed in the twinkling of an eye, and is re-united with our

spirit, and as we'll see in the chapters we'll be covering soon, there is then described what sounds like a period of time in which Jesus will be King here on this earth leading only those who made Him their King, and then after that time those who rejected Jesus will be resurrected and *their* bodies reunited with their souls, but then the great Judgment will occur and they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. Again, it's a bit mysterious and cryptic, so I don't think any of us can be 100% sure on exactly what it looks like and on all the details, logistics, order, timing, etc concerning the period of time between death and Jesus' Kingdom establishment, but we *can* be sure that the only way to be ok no matter what is to make Jesus King of our lives right now today.

Verse 11- Jesus is described as riding a white horse- not a humble, peaceful entry as riding a donkey would convey, as Jesus did previously when He entered Jerusalem and was declared King a week before His crucifixion- rather He's riding a white horse, which has already in Revelation 6 been associated with conquering. He is described as Faithful and True, He is righteous (justified) in how He judges, conquers, and wages war with His enemies.

Verse 12- His eyes are a flame of fire- all consuming, burning intensely- nothing escapes His gaze. On His head are *many* crowns- kings of the past have identified themselves as the ruling entity through wearing a crown on their head- but this is the King of all kings, the Lord of all lords, He is identified with multiple crowns and is worthy of wearing them all.

He has a name written on Him that no one knows, no one understanding it, they can't read it, they don't have the knowledge to absorb it, the meaning escapes all. We know Him as Jesus, Yeshua, Christ, Messiah, Son of God, Son of Man, Lord, Emmanuel, Good Shepherd, Alpha and Omega, Lamb of God, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, Bread of Life, Light of the World, High Priest, Cornerstone; but there is even *more* to Him than what we currently know and understand.

Verse 13- His robe is dipped in blood, representing the blood He shed for you and for me on the cross, in order that our sins could be forgotten. Here's another name for Him- also previously mentioned in the book of John chapter 1- He is the Word of God. We often think of Jesus as the form of God that was reveled to mankind, the form of God that we could recognize and interact with,

but even God the Father's words spoken all throughout the Old Testament- even *those* words were through Jesus. Even God's words to the Old Testament prophets were a revelation of God through the vehicle we now know as Jesus.

Verse 14- the armies in heaven- clothed in fine, clean, white linen, representing righteousness and purity- these armies on white horses have been assumed by some to be angels and heavenly beings, others have assumed them to be those who died during the Tribulation or those who were previously raptured or possibly the 144,000, still others state that these are all the saints of God- comprised of those who were dead *and* those who are still alive during the Tribulation, who are in the twinkling of an eye transformed and raptured up in this exact moment in order to join Jesus and return with Him, and lastly there are some who say it's a mix of all the above. Personally I don't really know, but maybe it seems like it would be more likely to be describing angelic warriors. The Greek word for "armies" here- and it's Hebrew equivalent- are both words meaning soldiers, troops, men of war- which Biblically speaking are terms used to describe Heavenly hosts, angelic warriors, God's Heavenly military forces- but I personally don't know of any usage of this word or it's Hebrew equivalent being used in the Bible to describe Christians or the church. This, along with the fact that it literally says the armies "which are in heaven," probably should cause us to think of this more as angelic heavenly armies, but either way- whether this is redeemed Christians or warrior angels, or both- the idea seems to be that it is only *Jesus* who fights and judges.

Verse 15- from His mouth comes a sharp sword- we've talked about this before, but it's probably not that Jesus has a literal sword for a tongue, but rather the imagery is symbolic of Him being able to fight and judge using the weapon of what comes out of His mouth- His words. His words alone will judge His enemies. The nations of the earth will be struck down by His words alone. All the kingdoms of the earth who will rally together in Babylon type fashion to make a name for themselves apart from God, will be struck down and judged at the return of Jesus, and He will be the new ruler. It says "*He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God.*" The imagery being conveyed here is that of the traditional wine press used during Biblical times. The way the winepress worked, is that there was a collection vat- something like a room with shallow pool walls- made out of rock or plaster, and it was sloped down to a lower vat- another shallow pool like room. Grapes would be harvested and placed on the floor of the

upper room, and workers would first wash their feet, and then climb down in to stomp around barefoot on the grapes. Some of you are squirming a little bit at the thought of drinking a beverage processed by people's feet, but I can assure you this is 100% a better technique than the one some of the jungle peoples I lived with used, who would create the beverage juice by chewing on the fruit and then spitting it out. I'll let you decide, but personally I would prefer the washed feet method. The grape juice would then flow from that upper floor down to the lower section, where it would be fermented and later bottled as wine.

This is the Biblical imagery used not only here, but in other places as well, to represent the thoroughness, the intensity, the crushing, bloody destruction of the enemies of God. I know, it's a little graphic, but that's what's going on here. This is a giant warning to the world, for people to make sure they are right with God and not acting as His enemy before passing from this life, or before He returns.

Verse 16- It is written on His robe and on His thigh "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." I love that it sounds like this is the title embroidered not only on His clothing, but it's also the tattoo permanently engraved on His skin. Being King of kings and Lord of lords is not just a title earned that he puts on with His wardrobe- no it's a title that's part of His physical being essence. **Verses 17-18...**

I know, this is a little more morbidness, sounds like a graphic scene from a horror film- I'm sorry, it is what it is- but the Bible here is conveying the idea that the death will be great. From the most insignificant of people, all the way up to the most mighty of kings, no one who has rejected Jesus will survive. Back in verse 9 we read last week about the wedding feast of the Lamb- the celebration intended for those who will be rescued by Jesus who have chosen to follow Him, and now there is another feast intended for those who rebel against Jesus- and they are the main course! The description of this same event is further described in **Verse 19...**

I've said this before, and at the time it kind of shook some people, but in the very end it's not going to be nations fighting nations as we see in today's wars, but rather in the end it will be nations *gathering together* in order to fight against Jesus. We saw the first steps towards this back Revelation 16:12 that talks about the Euphrates river drying up so that the kings from the east will be able to travel to and assemble (assumedly in Israel), then Revelation 16:14 demons are sent

out to gather not only these kings of the east, but also all the rest of the kings of the entire world to gather them all together (again, assumedly in Israel), and now we have in Revelation chapter 19 the culmination of these prior verses, the kings are now assembled to make war against Jesus- and Jesus appears from the Heavens coming down with the armies of Heaven to answer their war cries- and it's a complete slaughter. **Verses 20-21...**

The beast- which previously seemed to be likened to a beast nation state, or nation state ruler- along with the false prophet- the other beast that arose from the land who was the mouthpiece and cheerleader of the beast nation state ruler- both of these are thrown into the lake of fire, which we'll later see in chapter 20 verse 10 described as a place of eternal torment.

Note in verse 20 that it says those who had received the mark (the mark that was given in order to be able to transact in the world), those were all *deceived*. In other words they thought they were getting something that they weren't. They placed their faith in a man-made system that was not able to give what was promised. And those who deceived and promised what they could not deliver, end up being the first ones thrown into the lake of fire. Verse 21 says that all the rest, all the other kings and nations gathered, all who are so mad at Jesus, wanting to fight Him- are killed by the sword of Jesus coming from His mouth.

Do not downplay the fierceness of Jesus. Yes, He is humble and gentle, patient and kind, He sacrificed His own life for you and for me, He loves everyone so much, there is an open invitation for all to receive Him and His forgiveness- but when He returns, He will come in fierceness. He is a mighty warrior to be respected and worshipped.

I showed you all what I call the Kingdom symbol, or the Kingdom flag, and shared with you how it has served me as a focus point, a reminder of the Kingdom that is coming, the Kingdom where our true citizenship is registered. That symbol is birthed from the passage we read today, encouraging us to anticipate the coming of our Lord who has eyes of fire, wearing many crowns, clothed with a robe dipped in blood, sword coming out of His mouth. It's my hope that this passage will be a rally point for Christians around the world, as we proclaim our allegiance to this coming warrior King Jesus. As you leave today, I have for you a Kingdom symbol sticker as a gift to you- if you would like

one, please just take one for now. But I'm going to pray for us, and then before you grab a sticker and leave, I have another Kingdom challenge for you. So let's go ahead and pray, and then I'll share that challenge with you.