

Revelation Chapter 19:11-17

Why should we be turning to the book of Revelation in a gospel meeting, and especially to this particular portion that we have read together? It deals with what we know better as "The battle of Armageddon". It is the record of the last great battle that will take place on earth before the Lord Jesus sets up His kingdom upon earth. Then will be fulfilled the line in the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come".

"Armageddon" is the name of a place near Jerusalem. It is mentioned in Revelation chapter 16, verse 16. Jerusalem will be under siege from the armies of this world. The city will be on the verge of defeat and collapse when the Lord Jesus will appear in power and great glory. He will crush all His enemies and establish His kingdom. It is what is called "His second advent". His first advent is recorded for us in the four gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These were the days of His humility and His eventual death upon the Cross. His second advent will be marked by power and glory and victory.

The gospel has to do with His death, burial, and resurrection. So we ask again, "Why Revelation 19?"

The answer is that we wish to go through this section of the Bible and highlight the huge contrasts between the Christ of the second advent and the Christ of the first advent. We want to tell out the gospel by contrasting these two events, separated by nearly two thousand years. Our points of interest are many:

1. a white horse
2. faithful and true
3. righteousness
4. judge
5. war
6. his eyes as a flame of fire
7. many crowns
8. blood
9. the word of god
10. his mouth
11. the rod of iron
12. king of kings
13. the great supper of God

We shall examine these points briefly in turn:

1 A white horse

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

The picture presented to us in this part of Revelation is of a general leading His

armies into battle. He has come to lift the siege of Jerusalem. How different then from His last grand entrance into the city. It is recorded for us in John chapter 12. He enters Jerusalem, not upon a white horse, but upon a colt, the foal of an ass. He is followed, not by an army, but by His band of 12 disciples, augmented by a few people of Bethany who had seen Him raise Lazarus from the tomb. They are announcing the arrival of the King of the Jews.

"Behold thy king cometh". When men turned their eyes to see this king, they saw, not a picture of glory, but a picture of humility. "He is meek and lowly: just and having salvation".

So, why did He not establish His kingdom when He rode into Jerusalem as recorded in John 12? Further down the same chapter, the Lord said:

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

When the Lord returns to earth, we shall see much fruit resulting from His death on the Cross. The Church will have already joined Him in heaven. There will be a revival amongst the Jews, and many will have believed in Him. Many amongst the Gentile nations will do likewise. He shall see the fruit of Calvary and be satisfied. For those then who have believed in Him, His second coming to earth will be a cause of much rejoicing. But for those who have not believed, it will be a time of grief and sorrow. He will come to judge all those who have rejected Him.

2 Faithful and true

He is called "faithful and true". He has always been such. When He first came to earth, He was God's faithful and true witness. The idea of being faithful is that He is trustworthy and dependable. Not only was He faithful to God, He is trustworthy and dependable for us. We can trust in Him, we can depend upon Him. Paul wrote to the Ephesians about the Lord Jesus – "in whom ye also trusted". He is our hope for heaven. He is also true, not least because He is divine. The bible speaks of God that cannot lie". The Lord Jesus said to Pilate, "I came to bear witness to the truth". In John 14:6, the Lord said to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth and the life." His word is the only word that is reliable – there is no way into heaven apart from Him.

The religions of men are founded at best on misunderstandings – at worst, on absolute lies. His word is the word of truth – we can depend upon it.

3 Righteousness

His coming will be in righteousness. He will have a just cause to judge the world. Men often describe a conflict today as a just war. They believe they are justified in taking up arms. Very often, the opposite is true. The often hidden motive is to protect their own interests, to advance their power and influence, to satisfy their own personal ambition.

Everything done by the Lord Jesus is done on a righteous basis. He had no hidden motives. At His entry into Jerusalem described above, His disciples said of Him, "He is just (or righteous), having salvation. Christians today are

commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel. We read the following about the gospel:

Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Because God is holy and righteous, He cannot ignore sin. The wages of sin must be paid – a righteous God must judge sin.. But God wants to fill His heaven with people just like His Son, holy and without blame. But our sins would have prevented us from ever being there. So, how can God be just and yet still be the justifier of men and women who are sinners. God's answer is Calvary. There upon the cross, the Lord Jesus took our sins upon Himself. He paid the penalty for our sin, which is death and separation from God. God therefore can still be righteous and judge our sin, but because He is gracious, He has found Another who was able to pay our debt.

4 Judge

The name "Jesus" means "Jehovah the Saviour". Joseph was told to call Mary's child "Jesus" for "He shall save His people from their sins". We read in 1st John chapter 4 that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. He could have come to condemn the world for even two thousand years ago, it surely deserved judgment, just as God was justified in destroying the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah many centuries earlier. But what do we read in John chapter 3?

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He came to seek and to save that which is lost, and even now that He has gone back to heaven, He is described presently as a "Prince and a Saviour". He has been this for the past two thousand years.

But soon, God's day of grace will come to an end. Because He is righteous, He will judge, and indeed must judge, the world. And God will judge the world by that man whom He has appointed, Christ Jesus the Lord. In John chapter 8, the Lord challenged the Jews, "Let him that is without sin first cast a stone at her". He alone will be justified to condemn the world when He comes the second time.

This is the event described in Revelation 19. In the earlier part of the chapter, we read about the marriage of the Lamb. Now we are to read about what is described in chapter 6 as the "wrath of the Lamb".

Hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

Have you ever seen an angry lamb? The lambs we see in the fields in spring are known for their gentleness and tenderness. But one day the world will see the wrath of the Lamb of God.

But it doesn't have to be like this for us. God is presently the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. It is our choice – to meet Him as Saviour today, or as our judge in a day to come.

5 War

He will come to make war. At His first coming, He came in peace. At His birth in Bethlehem, the angel said of Him, "On earth peace, goodwill towards men". He is the prince of peace. Ephesians chapter 2 says of Him, "He is our peace": "So making peace": He "preached peace". He has brought about peace between God and sinners - sinners who were at enmity with God because of their sin.

The great truth of the Reformation was that, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". We can only know this peace through faith ie through believing in the Lord Jesus.

At His first coming then, He came as a Saviour to make peace between God and sinners. That is still true today, but one day He will come to judge and to make war.

6 His eyes as a flame of fire

We never read in the gospels anything regarding the physical appearance of the Lord Jesus, which to me seems strange. In the Old Testament we read of David that he was "white and ruddy"; of King Saul that he stood head and shoulders above his fellows etc. But not a word about the Lord's physical features. We do not learn the colour of His eyes, for example, but we do learn from the gospels about the tenderness and compassion with which He looked upon men and women. We find Him therefore in a wilderness with a crowd of more than five thousand people. He saw four things about them - their physical needs, and He healed those who were sick amongst them. He saw their spiritual need, and taught them many things. He saw their natural needs - they were hungry and He fed every one. He saw them as sheep scattered without a shepherd, and He brought order by setting them down in fifties and hundred. He looked and His look brought about His compassion. He had power to heal the lepers, but one day He looked at a man who was a leper and was moved with compassion towards him. He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I will: be thou clean".

When He came to the tomb of Lazarus as described in John chapter 11, He knew that He was about to raise him. But when He saw Mary weeping and the Jews also weeping, "Jesus wept". What He saw moved Him to tears.

Hence we can say, to meet the Saviour of this present day of grace, is to meet a man with eyes full of compassion. But to meet Him in a coming day is to meet one whose eyes are as a flame of fire. They are fiery with judgment.

7 Many crowns

In Revelation 19, the rider on the white horse comes forth with many crowns or many diadems upon His head. At His first coming, He wore no crown nor was He was given any apart from the crown of thorns placed upon His brow by the Roman soldiers. Yet He was the king of the Jews, as announced by the wise men from the east when they came to find the young child.

Where is He that is born king of the Jews?

He was not born to be king – He was king from the moment of His birth.

We are not told how many crowns the Lord shall be wearing - only that there are many. In Revelation 13 we read of the beast with ten crowns. He is the satanically inspired man before whom many shall bow in a day to come. As we approach this day, we might well ask the question of men, "To whom will you bow? Will it be to the Lord Jesus now, or to the Beast in a coming day?"

Some would say today, "I have no interest in religion. I do not want to hear". But there will come a day, foretold by the Lord Himself, when every ear will hear His voice and respond to it.

The day cometh when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth, some to a resurrection of life: some to a resurrection of damnation. He is the inescapable Christ. The bible advises us, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart"

8 Blood

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

The blood in verse 13 is not His own blood but the blood of His enemies, whom He shall conquer at Armageddon.

His first coming to earth came to an end by His death on the Cross. There He shed His blood in giving His life for sinners.

Much is made of the blood of the sacrifices in the book of Leviticus – there are almost 70 references in all. In the New Testament, we learn that we are redeemed by His blood, that we are brought near in to God by His blood, that our sins are covered by His blood. The shedding of His blood is the evidence that His life has been given for us.

Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

After His first appearing, sinners can be saved by His blood, but when He comes again, it will be the blood of sinners that will be shed when He comes as the judge of all the earth.

9 The word of God

Previously in this section, we read of a mysterious name – a name that no man knew but He Himself. But now, in verse 13, He has a name that is given to us. He is called the Word of God.

He is called the Word in John 1, verse 1, of course.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The "Word" is here used as a divine title of Christ. The idea is that He is someone by whom divine thoughts and feelings will be revealed. I might have beautiful thoughts in my head, but until I express them by the written or by the spoken word, I will keep such thoughts to myself. God wants to reveal Himself to us and He has always revealed Himself through the Word. The Word is the creator of all things and God has revealed His eternal power and deity

through the things that are made. In Him is life, and the life is the light of men. But then the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. He was in the bosom of the Father and came to reveal the Father to us. He spoke the Father's words and did the Father's works. As the Word, He came to reveal God to men.

He is still the Word of God in Revelation 19, but now He is the One who is going to search the hearts of men and bring the judgment of God upon them. Hebrews 4 tells us that the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. Here it is used in judgment.

10 His mouth

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

When He was here on earth the first time, He was noted for the gracious words that came forth from His mouth. He spoke of forgiveness to the paralysed man let down through the roof by his friends, to the woman of the city who was a sinner, and to those who crucified Him at Calvary.

But when He comes again to earth, He shall speak words of judgment, He shall smite whole nations with the sword that comes out of His mouth. This sword may well be the word of God mentioned previously.

11 The rod of iron

This is now the fulfilment of Psalm 2. The Psalm begins with a question.

1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

It is man's final rebellion against God which will culminate with Armageddon. The early church, in Acts chapter 4, applied the above words to how Herod and Pilate, with the Jews and the Gentiles, rose up against the Lord. But the verse will surely be fulfilled in the day of rebellion that is still to come. But God will respond with His wrath, carried out by the Lord Jesus.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

The nations will be judged without mercy.

Everything we have discussed so far should make us think. If we already belong to the Lord, how grateful we should be that we know Him as Saviour. We can say with assurance that this coming day of judgment will not affect us. But if we do not know Him now as a Saviour, it should challenge us to believe in Him now, and so avoiding this coming day of judgment.

Psalm 2 gives sound advice to the people of this generation:

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath

is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Paul wrote thus to the Christians at Thessalonica:

God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

12 King of kings

Here is a second name given to the Lord Jesus. He is the king of kings. Only two other men are given this title in the Bible. One is Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who is so described by Daniel. "Thou o king art a king of kings". The other is Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who calls himself "king of kings" in the book of Ezra. It was an accurate description of both men, for both were head of mighty empires that ruled over many kings and nations. But their empires will be miniscule compared to that of the Lord Jesus. His dominion shall be from shore to shore, from the river to the ends of the earth.

After their defeat at Armageddon, how will men respond to the Lord Jesus, the king of kings? It is elaborated for us in Philippians chapter 2:

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The response will be universal. All heaven will bow to Him, but that is to be expected. Then all on earth shall bow to Him – that is a surprise. This will include all those who reject Him today – those who say He is irrelevant, who say there is no God, who say they need no salvation.

But the response goes further still – it includes all under the earth, in hell itself. Those who have died without Christ will then bow to Him and confess Him as Lord.

Is this then a great day of revival? It is not a day of revival but rather a day of vindication. God will compel men to bow to His Son. This will be the fulfilment of God's will for His Son.

Joh 5:23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

Will men be able to opt out then, as they think they can today? Tragically for them, they will not. The Lord Jesus is sometimes called the "incomparable Christ", but He is the inescapable Christ. There will be no deaf ears then. Every ear shall hear, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess. The question each one should be asking today is "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

13 The great supper of God

In Luke chapter 14, the Lord told a parable of a certain Lord who made a great supper. When the preparations were complete, he sent out his servants with a

message of invitation, "Come, for all things are now ready". The servants went out into the streets of the city with their invitation, but when they returned with the guests, there was still room. The servants were sent out again into the highways and byways so that the house might be filled. It typifies the great invitation that God is sending out today through the gospel. God is saying to all, "Come".

But in this future day of judgment, the invitation will be withdrawn. Men will no longer hear the invite, "Come". There will again be a great supper, but the food will be the carcasses of those destroyed in the battle of Armageddon. What a tragedy! Men who might have been saved had they heeded the gospel call will one day their carcasses will be food for the birds of the air.

We say again, "It is time to seek the Lord"

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near".
"Now is God's day of salvation".