



river west church

Christ: The Ruling, Restoring Word

Revelation 2:12

Pastor Christopher Coffman

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Putting Christ Back In Christmasianity

Throughout our series in Revelation many folks have asked why we have chosen to usher in the Christmas season with such an intense book of the Bible. As I've thought about this question, I've realized that it actually has a lot to do with something we believe as a church. While some folks see the Christmas season as an opportunity to put Christ back in Christmas, here at River West we see each Sunday morning as an opportunity to put Christ back in Christianity. This is why we've chosen to open our Bibles to the book of Revelation as a church this season—to see who the Jesus of scripture *truly is*. No other book challenges us to rethink our vision of Jesus more than the book of Revelation. It is, as John tells his readers from the start, “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:1). John's goal throughout Revelation is to reveal and remind his readers who the true Jesus is. However, this is Jesus' goal as well. This is why Christ begins each letter to seven churches by reminding them who is speaking to them. Jesus really is the risen ruler and restorer of all things! And, yes, this Jesus really wants to speak to us today.

Christ: The Ruling Word

Of all the things John saw, none is perhaps more frightening than the vision of Jesus with a sharp sword coming out of His mouth. And yet, this vision of Jesus shows up in both the beginning and near the end of Revelation (1:16; 19:15-16). Now, these visions not are intended to freak us out (1:17). Instead, they are meant to fill us with a radical hope in who Jesus is. The Jesus of the Bible is no wimpy, sword less Savior. He is the risen ruler of all things (1:18)! But how does Christ, our “King of kings and Lord of lords”, actually rule a world where Satan, sin, suffering, and death seem to always have the last word (19:16)? The answer, according to the book of Revelation, is that these things do not have the last word. *Jesus does*. Jesus is “The Word of God” who rules the world and wages war against Satan, sin and death with the sword coming out of His mouth (19:13). He alone “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb 1:3). A swordless Savior can't do these things. Only the real Jesus can!

Christ: The Restoring Word

Now, for many, the image of a God who rules the universe with a sword is unsettling. Some may perhaps even conclude that such a God is cruel and unkind—a cosmic bully with a big sword who always gets his way. Thankfully, this is not the God of the Bible. Christ, our Savior, was born to bring broken people back into loving fellowship with God (Is 49:1-6). He not only rules the world but “sympathize(s) with our weakness” (Heb 4:15). Make no mistake, our Savior's words are “sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12). Christ's words are not meant to wound us, but to restore us. He will heal our deepest wounds as we let down our defenses and allow Him to speak to us through scripture today. Knowing this, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16)