



river west church

The Supremacy of Jesus Christ

Revelation 19:11-21

Pastor Adam McMurray

6.12.2011

“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems ... From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty”

Revelation 19:11, 12, & 15

When you read the book of Revelation, you are bombarded with graphic imagery. This is one of the hallmarks of Apocalyptic Literature. These “word pictures” increase our appreciation for the splendor and the complexities of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They engage our imagination, our senses, and our fullest attention. But most importantly, they force us to respond. You don’t read Revelation 19 like you read the almanac, or the sports page. You are compelled to respond; to get involved; or more precisely, to make a decision. It is the decision that every person must make when they are confronted with the true reality of the Supremacy of Jesus Christ.

Jesus the Conquering King

In the second half of Chapter 19, Jesus appears as the Conquering King who rides out on a white horse to defeat His enemies. It is a picture of Jesus as the victorious champion of the Church. The vision captures His power, dominance, superiority, and strength. “His eyes are like a flame of fire” and a sharp sword comes from His mouth “with which to strike down the nations” (Rev. 19: 12 & 15). The meaning of the vision could not be clearer. Jesus is dominant. Jesus is all-powerful. Jesus wins. There is no chance of defeat. There is no chink in the armor; not even a hint of weakness.

The notion of Jesus as a warrior may be foreign and perhaps even insulting to our “modern sensibilities”. However, it is a frequent Old Testament depiction of God’s Messiah (cf. Gen. 49:8-12, Psalm 2, Isaiah 11:1-5, 63:1-4), and more importantly, it is essential to a balanced understanding of the message of the Gospel.

The Power of Jesus for Life and for Death

The vision of Jesus as a Conquering King brings balance to the other imagery in Chapter 19. In the first half of the Chapter, Jesus appears as the Bridegroom married to His Bride, the Church (Rev. 19:6-10). This is an important image for us, because it speaks of the indescribable intimacies of our faith relationship with Christ. The picture of the “marriage of the Lamb” reminds us of the great love of Christ for His church and the great sacrifice He experienced to make her holy for Himself (Ephesians 5:25-27). This is the power of the Gospel to bring new life, forgiveness of sins, peace and restored relationship with God our creator.

But the Gospel is also very powerful in another way, because the Gospel is the power of God to destroy an enemy. The incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are God's response to opposition. As Eugene Peterson says it, "The fact is that salvation is war!" When Christ returns, this will mean the final and ultimate death of evil, sin, and brokenness in our world. Jesus will win back all that was lost to the invasion of sin and evil. This is why Revelation 19 depicts His return as a cosmic battle (Armageddon). Christ the King rides out on a white horse with the army of saints in tow to meet the armies that have gathered around the beast and the false prophet and the deceived kings of the earth. The build-up to the moment of conflict is impressive, but the battle is not. In fact, it is as if there is no battle at all. The battle is over before it starts. Jesus is absolutely and undeniably superior, and the sword-word that comes from His mouth is overwhelmingly powerful!

The Supremacy of Jesus and the Battle for Your Heart

Christians can and should take great hope in this future, certain victory of Jesus over evil. However, the significance of Revelation 19 does not lay only in its predictions of the future. For many today, a battle rages in your own heart as you read this. It is a battle for control, and the bottom line is that Jesus wants it. He does not want control because He is a tyrant. He wants control because He is sovereign creator, "Faithful and True", and the slain Lamb who suffered to save you from the very sin and evil that fights for control in your heart. Jesus seeks to conquer and free you today. Will you respond? I pray today that each one of us will come before Christ and humbly turn over control of our hearts and lives; every last detail. All for the Glory of God!