**Revelation**

*Lesson 36 – Revelation 19:11-21*

* Tonight’s section will bring the 6th cycle of Revelation to a close. Tonight we will see that at the marriage supper of the Lamb, there is war and this cycle, like all the other cycles in Revelation, ends with the 2nd coming of Jesus.

*Verses 11-16: The Rider on a White Horse with armies*

1. John sees the heavens opened up so again this is visionary language and out of heaven comes a white horse. White speaks of purity or the reward for purity (Rev 1:14; 2:17; 4:4; 14:14). It’s a picture of divine holiness and cleanliness. The name of the rider is “Faithful and True.” Revelation 1:5 calls Jesus “the faithful witness.” **Revelation 3:14** – “And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness,…’” **Revelation 22:6** – “These words are trustworthy [faithful] and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.” Jesus begins Revelation as the faithful and true witness and here at the end, He is the faithful and true judge and warrior.
2. After the names of the ride, John then sees the purpose of the rider. This rider “judges and makes war.” **Exodus 15:3** – “The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name.” Also see Habakkuk 3:8-15, Isaiah 59:16-18, Ezekiel 38-39, and Zechariah 12:1-9, 14:3-5, for other examples where God describes Himself as making war and being a divine warrior. The difference between this war and human wars is that this war is perfectly just and righteous. Whereas human wars have collateral damage, and leave unjust suffering, this war is going to be completely righteous. There will be absolutely nothing unjust about it and there will be no collateral damage.
3. Then verses 12-16 further describes this Messianic rider.
   1. Fiery eyes – **Revelation 1:14** – “His eyes were like a flame of fire.” Also see Revelation 2:18 as well as Daniel 10:6. This phrase means that Christ is aware of everything. He has a penetrating gaze and nothing can be hidden from Him. Therefore He can judge righteously and with perfect justice because He has all the facts.
   2. Many crowns on His head – The only other actors in Revelation wearing many crowns is the dragon with 7 diadems and the beast with 10. But Christ has an undefined number of crowns on His head. His sovereign authority and rule as king is eternal, whereas the dragon and beast have limited authority and power. He is, as verse 16 puts it, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There is no authority or power greater than Him.
   3. Robe dipped in blood – Whose blood is this? 1) Christ on the Cross [Sam Storms, Leon Morris, FF Bruce] 2) Christ’s defeated enemies [William Hendriksen, Vern Poythress, Greg Beale, John Walvoord] or 3) Martyred saints [GB Caird]
      1. Those who argue that it’s Christ’s own blood point to the fact that the war hasn’t started yet so it can’t be His enemies and to the fact that it’s Christ’s blood that is the key to working out God’s plan for all of history as we saw in Revelation 5. The Lamb is worthy to take the scroll because He was slain.
      2. Those who argue for Christ’s defeated enemies point to Isaiah 63:2-3. There somebody asks of God why His garments are red “like his who treads in the winepress.” God responds that He has trodden the winepress alone and “their lifeblood spattered on my garments and stained all my apparel.”
   4. The Word of God – Go back and listen to my Christmas Sunday sermon on the Word of God. ☺
   5. Sharp Sword – This sword is in all likelihood the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). **Isaiah 49:2** – “He made my mouth like a sharp sword” **Isaiah 11:4** – “and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth…” Also see Revelation 1:16 where Christ is pictured as having a sword come out of His mouth.
   6. “King of Kings and Lord of Lords” written on robe and thigh – The thigh was where a warrior carried his sword (Exodus 32:27; Judges 3:16-17; Psalm 45:3) and where hands were placed to make an oath (Genesis 24:2, 9; 47:29). So His name and identity as King of Kings and Lord of Lords is located where a weapon would be in battle because Jesus is overcoming all pretenders who claim to have absolute power and authority and its where oaths are made because Jesus is the Faithful and True one who is bringing about the promises of God’s Word.
4. But what does verse 12 mean when John writes, “He has a name written that no one knows but Himself”?
   1. “No one knows” is a reference to power. In Genesis 32:29 and Judges 13:17-18, the name is asked of a divine messenger, probably the pre-Incarnate Christ, but the answer is never given. To know a person’s name meant to have power over that person so a name only known to Jesus would indicate that no one has power over Jesus.
   2. “No one knows” is a reference to prophecy not yet fulfilled. Based on Isaiah 62:2-5 & 63:1-3 as well as Revelation 2:17 & 3:12, the “new name” of latter-day Jerusalem (the people of God), who also receive a diadem and crown, demonstrates an intimate relationship with God. If this is the case, then the name is known only to Christ at this point to show that the fulfillment of Isaiah 62 & 63 has not come to pass yet, but is about to come.
5. Notice in verse 14 that Christ is not alone. But the question is who makes up this army that is with the Lord? Some say only angels. Others say Christian martyrs. Some say both. Others say all Christians. Some say angels and Christians
   1. Jesus is coming back with angels – **Mark 8:38 –** “of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” Angels are clothed in white. **John 20:12** – “And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain
   2. Jesus is coming back with Christians – **Revelation 17:14** – “the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.” Saints are clothed in white. **Revelation 7:14** – “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
6. But despite all of the armies being with Him, Jesus is the only described as fighting. He alone is the one who fights and conquers, but His armies get to share in the victory.
7. And after the victory, verse 15 says Christ will rule the nations with a rod of iron and tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. **Psalm 2:9** – “You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Jesus is also described as ruling with a rod of iron in Revelation 2:27 and 12:5. Jesus rules over unbelievers because He is the Creator who owns them and He will destroy them because they did not believe His Word as true or obey it as commanded. Additionally, we’ve seen the winepress image elsewhere in Revelation 14:19-20 and 16:19. Unbelievers will drink the fullness of God’s anger and wrath in judgment.

*Verses 17-21: Battle of Armageddon*

1. Greg Beale notes, “The destruction of Babylon recounted in Revelation 17-19:6 was not a complete defeat of all the forces of wickedness. God’s agent in defeating Babylon was the beast and his forces. Therefore, for the victory to be complete, these forces must also be destroyed.”
2. This description of Armageddon parallels with Revelation 16:14-17 and Revelation 20:7-10. If you read Revelation linearly, then there are multiple battles of Armageddon, as well as multiple comings of Christ. But if it’s a series of parallel cycles looking at the same time period from different angles, then that best explains why there seem to be these multiple occurrences and these occurrences also help us to see where to separate out the cycles in Revelation.
3. In verses 17-18, an angels calls to the birds to come and gather to feast on the flesh of all of those allies of the dragon, beast, and false prophet. To have birds feast on someone is a symbolic picture of God’s curse. Not only is it death of the disobedient wicked, but it’s also the shame and ignominy of not even being properly buried. **Genesis 40:19** – “And the birds will eat the flesh from you [Pharaoh’s baker].” **Deuteronomy 28:26 –** “And your [God’s disobedient Israelites] dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away. **1 Samuel 17:44**  - “And I [David] will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.” **Jeremiah 7:33** – “And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, and none will frighten them away.” See also Ezekiel 38-39.
4. Notice the brevity of the battle in verses 19-20. There’s the gathering in verse 19 and in verse 20 there’s the capture of the generals. There’s no resistance even though all of Satan’s allies are gathered together against God. There’s no one side is winning and now the other side is winning. There’s no battle at all because Christ simply says the Word (verse 21) and all His enemies are defeated. The beast and false prophet that Satan called up to help him in his battle against the Lord God Almighty are captured and thrown into “the lake of fire that burns with sulfur,” that is, hell. See Matthew 5:22 and Mark 9:43 for other references to hell as fire.
5. Also notice that in God’s judgment all unbelievers are equal. Kings, generals, and mighty men are all judged as well as small men, great men, free men, and slave men. Under God’s condemnation and wrath, the playing field is level.
6. At the end of Revelation 19, none of God’s enemies are left standing. It’s complete destruction. They are all slain. This is going to be important, in fact key, to understanding our interpretation of Revelation 20.

**Message for Us**

1. “Jesus’ faithfulness to the Father in obeying every command and his faithfulness in fulfilling every promise he has ever made are the foundation of his right to bring judgment. Jesus always spoke the truth and never compromised. You can’t trust anyone but Jesus. He is the only one who always speaks the truth and never lies. He is the only one who is always faithful to his promises, never breaking his word. He is the only one who will never betray you or break a confidence. He is the only one who will tell it like it is, regardless of how it may make you feel.” –Sam Storms
2. “The mystery of the full biblical picture of Jesus is of One who hung defenseless on the cross, taking the punishment for our sins and calling us to serve Him in weakness, yet who one day will ride forth to execute vengeance, with us alongside Him. A true understanding of Christ can only come as we consider all these elements of who He is. He has given everything, as must His followers, to reach those still outside His grasp, yet by virtue of His holiness must bring God’s righteous rule to creation by judging those who choose to bring destruction on the earth (Rev. 11:18).” –Greg Beale
3. In general, here’s what is going to happen at Christ’s 2nd coming when we bring all of Scripture to bear: 1) Christ will descend from heaven to earth with His angels and those who had died in the faith; 2) A trumpet will sound and those who are with Christ will receive their resurrected and glorified bodies; 3) Believers still alive on earth will be caught up into the air with Jesus and also receive their glorified bodies; 4) Christ with His angels and all believers will continue descending to the earth and participate in the final victory of Christ over all of His enemies.
4. Are you going to eat with God as an invited guest or are you going to be eaten by birds because of the hardness of your heart and unbelief?