

He Shall Win The Battle

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Well, tonight we are turning to the book of Revelation, chapter 19, picking up again in our study in the book of Revelation, we will conclude this chapter tonight, verses 11 to the end of the chapter. That Psalm, Psalm 110, so powerfully said it of what we're looking for when the Lord returns in might, that anticipated it there in Psalm 110 and here we see that now in fulfillment. That's what we're studying tonight from Revelation 19. This is the word of the Lord. We'll pick up at verse 11.

11 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. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 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. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

There ends the reading of God's word.

We have been studying in the book of Revelation now for some time and been looking at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and how that is depicted and how that is portrayed for us as a great rescue of God's people. A great rescue. Every time throughout history when God's people were on the verge of being crushed, when God's people were on the verge of being stamped out of the world and of societies, the Lord intervened in a judgment to rescue them. Think of Lot. It had become so bad that Abraham had asked, remember, a series of questions to the Lord, "Lord, if there are fifty, will you spare the city?" And he went all the way down, remember, to ten. "Yes, I will spare the city if I find that amount." But there weren't. So the angels had to come and pull Lot out. The same was true for Noah and his family. Entered the ark, that family. It was the same for Israel being crushed in Egypt. And that's essentially where we are tonight in Revelation. "Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved," said Jesus. We're looking here at something very important tonight. In Revelation 19, what is described is the final appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ to come and to rescue us and to repay those who trouble us. That's the big theme here tonight.

This was always meant, the Second Coming, even though I know what people have done to it to disturb us and make us scared about this event, the Second Coming has always been an event for us that is to be one of great comfort as we look for this day, as we anticipate this day of deliverance and rescue from all the hardship in the world, from all the persecution, from all the evil, and this has the effect of saying to us tonight, "Just wait a little bit longer. I'm going to make all of this right. I promise you." Tonight could be summarized with the passage in 2 Thessalonians 1 that was given by Paul to the church in Thessalonica. Listen to this language, and this is the summary of what Revelation 19 is showing us. "Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence," so when you're being persecuted, when you're facing afflictions for the faith, "This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering--since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed."

Well, ask tonight, he had said there very clearly that the Lord is going to repay, it is a just thing for him to do that, and I think that should have the effect tonight of saying, "Be patient. We're almost there. Don't fall apart now. Don't retaliate. Judgment is mine. I will repay," says the Lord. "Don't become overly discouraged in this mess. I have already told you," says the Lord. What has he shown us in Revelation? "I'm not losing one of you. I've already shown you visions of you gathered around in the future, around the throne. You're all there. All of God's people are there. Your names are written down in the Lamb's Book of Life. I've already shown you these visions of the future. So as you go forward then in this mess, know that whatever hardships, whatever persecutions,

whatever spiritual battles, whatever demonic assaults like you saw today, whatever wicked people do to you and your children, I am telling you, I will deal with it." We've been saying that a long time. He's been saying that a long time. And we see tonight we have a glorious description of the arrival of our champion. We have the announcement of his righteous judgment and the fall of the dragon's kingdom. That's how you can break this down, the arrival of the champion, the announcement of judgment, and the fall of the dragon's kingdom. All those three things are captured here in Revelation 19 and all of it has the goal of saying, "Keep your eyes on the Savior. What he promised you, he's not going to fail to give you. He will give you relief now as you call out to him in prayer, and he's going to give it to you forever in glory."

Let's look at this glorious passage tonight. Last time we had the description of Babylon's fall. That was the kingdom, that was the city of the dragon. Remember the imagery. The angel had taken a giant millstone and he put it around the neck of the prostitute, around the neck of the woman, around the neck of Babylon, and he dropped her right out on in the middle of the sea, never to see her again. So remember what all that symbolized. It symbolized the earthly city, the world, and all that it offers us, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, all symbolized by Babylon and her cup, the earthly city and everything that seduces you away from Jesus in that cup that she holds. Her fall is described there. The woman's done. And we had then a beautiful section there describing our entrance into glory and what were we doing in the first section of Revelation 19? We began the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. It was glorious. I loved preaching that. John was so overtaken with it, he fell down at the angel's feet and started worshipping and the angel said, "Don't do that." He was so taken by the glory that is to come and what we're about ready to enjoy when we enter glory. Well, what Revelation is now doing is showing us how the Lord is systematically taking down the whole kingdom of Satan. Babylon is judged, chapter 18. We were introduced to some figures in chapter 13, remember, of the unholy trinity, the beast and the false prophet. Babylon was a city. Now we're dealing with the unholy trinity and its lie. And so what we have in chapter 19 is the judgment of the beast and the false prophet and then in chapter 20, we have the judgment of the dragon, and once the dragon and all his followers are dealt with, we have a beautiful description in chapters 21 and 22 of glory. And we'll get there.

Revelation, of course, has not been addressing these things as we look at them from Romans or other books of the Bible, looking at things from the sinful nature perspective; it certainly does at some points. It's looking at things from the spiritual cosmic battle perspective. It's addressing things cosmically. So, it's looking at things between the spiritual forces of darkness and its kingdom and that which is light and its kingdom. It's divided things that way. You've been conveyed out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his Son in love, notice that distinction there. It's showing us a warfare and a battle between these two kingdoms, Satan and his beast having a community and God and his Christ having a community. And that's all the way back from Genesis 3 when the Lord made the whole division of mankind, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed." And here it's all culminating at the end to show us the final fulfillment of all of that. The outcome is all based on the success of the champion.

So think of the beauty of this, what Revelation has done is shown us that there has been a false champion, an antichrist. There has been somebody to challenge our champion. The dragon had raised up an antichrist figure, the beast, this figure throughout history, that the dragon wanted to bring people to the beast that people might worship him through the message of the false prophet. And there we saw the unholy trinity, a false God the Father figure, a false in the dragon, a false Christ figure, an antichrist in the beast, and then a false Holy Spirit in the false prophet. The beast power is seen in government. It was seen in authority structures. As people were lured by the world and Babylon, they have given their hearts to the beast. They've given their hearts and loyalties to what this world has promised and the kingdoms of this world promise in happiness. This is why we've always been saying don't put your trust in kings. Don't put your trust in princes. Don't put your trust in the United States. We've done that for too long. In the midst of this, another kingdom had risen up with an entirely different kind of champion. Daniel talked about this. This kingdom has a people. This kingdom has a king, a community that is the object of the beast's assault. So what I want you to see, then, is that we have the battle of Genesis 3 now coming to the head when the Lord described as a champion, remember, would come and crush the head of Satan. That'll be chapter 20. But what is now described here is all of this reaching its end in history.

So that's where we are. Look at verse 10, "Then I saw heaven opened." Sorry, this is verse 11. We'll get there, see? "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." Everything about the beast has been a lie, has been false, but now we have the revealing of the one true one. I want you to think about this for a moment tonight. What is here described is the final revelation of Jesus coming in glory. There's no other way to describe this than to say he is awesome, but you have to think of this for a minute in terms of your vindication. What I mean is that the cause that you have taken up will all be proved to be true, that's what makes this so awesome. You believed in him. You have worshiped him for years. You having not seen him, love him. Think of what Peter would say in the epistles when he said, "Though you have not seen Jesus, you love Jesus." And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. All these years you've been praying to him. If you're new to Christianity, you just started praying to him. But now you know him. You have trusted his word but you've been the ridicule on the earth, you've been a fool for his sake. No one really takes us that seriously as they should. We get no media attention unless something happens like what it did today or unless somebody does something just terrible. All they want to do is shame us. We have professed for years that he is the King and Lord over all but everything we experience and everything that we live seems to say differently, doesn't it? We're in struggle. I could use the words of the Apostle Paul, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake."

This life has been nothing but struggle. I know you've tried to create differently. I know you want it to avoid struggle, but you've never gotten away from it, have you? Never

have. Everything else has seemed to have more power. Everything that we have stood for is ultimately mocked. Do people value the church? Does the world value our morality or do they hate it? We have felt like our entire life we've been on the losing team. I hate being on losing teams, let me tell you; it just gets old getting beat all the time, right? That's what we feel like at times, doesn't it? A group of weak we have been called, Christianity is for weak, unstable people, and we know that's true because we know what we are, but we know where our strength is. We feel displaced, this displaced team that no one really takes seriously. And we struggled so much with that. We struggled so much with it that everything that we're trying to do and anything we're trying to do is just make this work in the world. That's why the church has been trying to fit in as much as it can, but do you notice we just never can? That's the struggle. We just don't fit in. It's been nothing but conflict. It's been nothing but division. This has been hard. I never knew it would be like this in ministry. I never knew the weight of the warfare. I never knew the struggle that would go on even internally, the separations that happen, the warfare that happens, the division in the church, the persecution, the hardship, the cosmic battle that we're in. We don't feel like winners at all.

You ever watched a movie and the antagonist, the bad guy is so strong, and he seems to be winning and then he knocks down the protagonist, he knocks down the champion, doesn't he? And the best movies that we like in life is when the protagonist gets up in the final blaze of glory to demonstrate his power and beat that foe. Those are my movies. Redemption movies. Those are my movies. I love those movies. It's built into us. The story is built into us. We find so much satisfaction in that, don't you? Have you ever watched that and looked for a hero and a champion and they rise up when they seem like they lost everything and you're like, "That's my guy. That's our hero. That's who I identify with. That's who I believe in." Our happiness is wrapped up in the victor. We want so bad to be it.

Do you know history ends this way? You have pictured the world with its champion here, the beast, the dragon with his champion, and then you have God's people feeling like they've lost, been trampled, feeling like they've been losing, feeling like their champion is irrelevant, that no one takes him seriously, making an appearance. Making an appearance unlike anything you could ever dream. This is awesome. Can you imagine what that's going to be like? Well, here you go. Sorry it's taken a while to get here, but I had to build it to that. Here's what you have. At the end of the day, on the last day, he appears. He appears and here you have him. The clouds roll back. Every eye sees him. Every eye. Nobody misses him. And what do they see? Heaven opens, and all of a sudden, John says, "I look and this powerful white horse appears, and one who sits on that horse." He's not on a donkey, is he? Contrary to the woman riding on the beast, notice this, here is purity. Here is power.

Notice what he's called, first thing he's called, he's called Faithful and True. See why I said vindication? In other words, the first thing he said is he is faithful. That's for you. That's for you. Hasn't he made promises to you your whole life? Christianity is a promise-driven life. You've been looking for something. You're looking for a city. You're looking for heaven. You've been waiting for all this for a long time. You've been living

by faith for a long time and now he has appeared to make good on all the promises. Now he's appeared. He's going to make good on all of them. Here he is. Everything you've ever believed about him as according to the Scriptures, as you trusted his word, because he is the Word, is true. He is truth.

This is the ultimate moment of your gaze. Theologians used to talk about the beautiful vision, that when you enter into glory, your reward is, one thing I've desired of the Lord, that I've looked for, that I may dwell in his house, to do what? Gaze upon the beauty of the Lord. You can get to do that. Look at him in the symbols that are given. This is the gaze of happiness. Here he is to defend you, to rescue you, and validate the cause that you've believed. I've often struggled with, and maybe boys and girls you struggle with this, or maybe adults you struggle with this, what's that going to be like? I've often wondered, "Am I going to be scared to death when he comes?" I always think of what Thessalonians said, that when he comes on that day, he is going to be glorified in his saints and he's going to be marveled at among those who have believed. You're going to be standing there saying, "There's my champion. There he is." Because our testimony to you was believed. You've believed him. You have boldness he's going to give you on that day. This is his will that you may have boldness on the day of judgment because he's not retrying you, by the way. You're not out on bail, as somebody else said. You're already forgiven. The trial has already happened. He already said it's finished for you.

Notice what they see, "his eyes were like a flame of fire." He sees everything. "On his head are many diadems." He's revealed as Lord overall, the King overall. "And he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He's clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron." That was what we sang out in Psalm 110. "He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." Here's your moment to admire him. Wow. I never can get away from what our Belgics says about this day. It's one of my favorite outside of Scripture descriptions of the last day that anyone's ever written. It says this,

"All men shall give an account of every idle word they have spoken, which the world only counts as amusement and jest [they laugh at this], then the secrets and hypocrisy of men shall be disclosed and laid open before all [he has eyes like a flame of fire].

And, therefore, the consideration of this judgment is justly terrible and dreadful to the wicked and ungodly, but most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and the elect; because then their full deliverance shall be perfected, and there they shall receive the fruits of their labor and trouble which they have borne. Their innocence [listen to this] shall be known to all, and they shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked, who most cruelly persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world; and who shall be convicted by the testimony of their own

consciences, and, being immortal, shall be tormented in that everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

But on the contrary, the faithful and elect shall be crowned with glory and honor; and the Son of God will confess their names before God His Father and His elect angels; all tears shall be wiped from their eyes, [I think they are reading Revelation 19, 20 and 21] all tears shall be wiped from their eyes and their cause, which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates as heretical and impious, will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God. And for a gracious reward, the Lord will cause them to possess such a glory as never entered into the heart of man to conceive."

That's where we are. In the previous section, he just described you entering into glory, now you have described in the rest of this chapter the conclusion of the battle for the beast and the false prophet.

The angel now appears. An angel appears. Notice what happens. He's standing in the sun. It's a strong angel, isn't it? He makes a glorious announcement. A summons. He cries out, to the birds, "Come! Come!" And all of a sudden, all these birds start coming together and flying. It's quite a moment, because now another supper is described. This is the supper for those who have had confidence in the dragon's champion, who have listened to the lie of the world and believed in him, the beast. Look what he says, "Come, gather for the feast that you may eat the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and those who sit on them, the flesh of people, free and slaves, both small and great." The imagery from this is taken from the Old Testament. It's taken from the book of Ezekiel chapter 39 on the judgment on Gog and Magog. This is what was said, "You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD." Here's what he's saying. He's using imagery of vultures and birds coming to devour prey. What does that mean? It has one powerful meaning in this section. When the day of the Lord comes, when the Lord appears and the announcement of the day of judgment has come, all those who have not believed in the Lamb and held fast to his word face the supper of judgment. I thought to myself this week, why is that so hard for us to hear? Why is that so hard? I think it's hard for us because it's hard to imagine a loving Jesus doing this but the reason we struggle with this is simply because God in his kindness and in his providence has given us such freedom from awful persecution, we don't appreciate the judgment as a rescue and righteous punishment to those who hurt us.

We haven't faced in God's providence things like others have faced. Dennis Johnson in his commentary mentions Miroslav Volf, who has recorded the awful things done to the Croatian people who have suffered at the hand of Serbian aggressors. Listen to this: their homes have been destroyed, villages plundered and burned, daughters raped, fathers and brothers murdered. He says the way that we've gotten through all that and have been able to respond to our attackers with grace is a confidence that God will bring the unjust to justice at the end of history. That's how we get through all this. He says the reason

judgment's hard for us in the West is because of what we've made of God. God can't judge anyone because he's all love. So he says, how could we ever have a message of non-retaliation if we take the message of his justice away, "I will judge. I will repay." In other words, if you've removed that message, you have no motivation to show grace to anyone in the present who persecutes you. That's his way of getting through it. He says you have to live in a quiet suburban home to accept the idea that nonviolence corresponds to a God who refuses to judge.

I think there's a more powerful example that we're a little more familiar with. Fifty little insignificant Christians today in a Christian church gathering this morning to worship. Over half the church didn't come home. Children. The pastor's daughter. Blood everywhere. You see the warfare? Revelation 19 means everything, doesn't it? Revelation 19 means everything. See, it shouldn't take little First Baptist church to make us desire Revelation 19 or else we've forgotten that we've been called out of the world and we're loving the world too much.

Let me ask you a question. I said this last time. It's not just somebody coming in and shooting up a church. You've been facing this assault on you and your children for a long time. Babylon has lured your children away for a long time. You've been sucked into this for a long time. I look at all of my children, we have to constantly train them and fight against, and that battle's overwhelming. And this entire system of darkness wants to destroy you, and it has taken down many. It's constantly holding out everything for them to pull them away from Jesus. Doesn't that make you desire Revelation 19? Doesn't that make you say, "Come, Lord Jesus, quickly"? All this? You're under assault constantly and what is described here is your victory. That's what I love about it. This is the final battle where your champion comes.

And Satan calls out, look what happens here, Satan calls out the beast and the false prophet and all that was ever said in Psalm 2 comes to a final realization. The rulers of the earth take a stand against the Lord and against his anointed. So that little showing of it today in Acts 4, now we've reached the fullness of it in Revelation 19. Notice what it says, "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army." That's the culmination of Psalm 2. They've come at him when he shows up. I don't know what that's going to look like. I can't even imagine it. Every kind of earthly power and weapon that the world can come at him with, end of history described right here. You know what's really amazing about this passage though is that it's called a battle, but where is one described? I mean, it's over before it started. The beast was captured. The false prophet is captured. And doing all these terrible things, "These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth," he just had to speak, "of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh." It's done. That's judgment. All the beasts and the forces of the dragon, it's done. It's done, and in the next chapter, he describes the dragon's ultimate fall. That's Satan.

So what you've seen here in Revelation, as we've come toward the end of the book, is the whole thing systematically kicked over and he's preparing for re-creation. That's what's coming. The glory of re-creation when there's no more of this. I mean, just think of the glory of now what's described then as we look at Revelation 21. "Then I saw," after all this, "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold,'" here it is, the tabernacle of God, "the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more," boy, won't that mean everything to those Christians in Texas right now, "there be no more mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.' And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making everything new.' Also he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" I'm getting ahead of myself. You want to go there now? We don't have to go there now. We'll wait until next time, okay? But I want to remind you of Peter's words, though having not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are still, even in the midst of all this, he's not left you to hang your heads, even in the midst of all this, you are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy. He gives that to you now, doesn't he? You're not leaving today with your heads hung low, are you? He's answered you. Therefore, prepare your minds for action and being sober-minded. As you go out this week, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus. What a great verse to end the sermon.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for these words that encourage us and thank you for assuring us we need this, that in the terrible things that happen in this world, you will make it right, your justice will be shown. And thank you that this is all going to be shown when the Lord Jesus reveals and everything that we believe will be shown and the world will see. What a day that's going to be. Thank you, Father, for encouraging our hearts today. Give us the simple childlike faith to believe and not doubt for Jesus said it's finished and our judgment day has already happened. So we, then, can surely live with joy inexpressible and fullness of joy in our lives this week as we set our hope on the revelation of Jesus Christ when he comes and the grace that will be given to us when he appears. Thank you for hearing us. In Jesus' name, amen.