KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

Revelation 19:11-21

Key Verse: 19:16

“On his robe and on his thigh he has this this name written: KIING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Through the last lesson on 19:1-10, we could think of the heavenly vision of hallelujahs. The reasons for heavenly hallelujahs are “salvation and glory and power belong to our God”, “true and just are his judgment”, “our Lord God Almighty and reign” and finally “the wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.” “The wedding of the Lamb has come.” This wedding is a perfect wedding in the perfect love of the perfect bridegroom, and it cannot be compared to any wedding in this world. This wedding of the Lamb is the yearning for his bride, whom he purchased with his blood and treasures as his holy and dearly loved ones (Rev. 5:9; Col. 3:12). Apostle Paul said to the elders in Ephesus at his farewell meeting with them, “Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). The church of the Lord is very precious in this world as his bride, for he bought her with the price of his own blood. Furthermore he gave up himself to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph. 5:25-27). May we keep our truly beautiful identity and live as his bride in this world, loving him with pure and wholehearted devotion and taking care of his flock of sheep and so make ourselves ready for this wedding of the Lamb.

This heavenly vision of hallelujahs ends. In today’s passage, John describes the return of the Messiah and his glorious victory over the beast and kings of the earth. Chronologically this passage is the continuation of chapter 16, where at the sixth bowl judgment the water of the great river Euphrates was dried up and spirit of demons gathered the kings of the whole world together for the battle on the great day of God Almighty, to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

The return of the Lord and his victory is the culmination of all of the Scripture, of all of Christian hope, of all of the hope of all the saints of all the ages. This battle is the final culminating battle for sovereignty in the universe, and this determines who will rule forever and ever and ever, and it will be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Revelation finally presents the vision of the second coming of the Lord Jesus in this passage, which excellently shows who the returning Christ is.

**First, the return of the Christ (11-16).** Verses 11-13 describes the return of Christ the Lord Jesus: “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.” Let’s think of the components description, one by one.

Firstly, “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.” We remember 4:1, “After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven.” And the voice of the risen Christ said (1:11), “Come up here, and I will show you what must soon take place after this.” In this chapter, the door of heaven was opened so John could go in and see inside. A number of times in the book of Revelation, heaven has been opened, and we have been given access to that. The reason for heaven standing open this time is to not let us in but to let someone out. In chapter 1, when John was in the Spirit, he saw someone ‘like a son of man’, who was ministering in his church. And in chapter 5, John saw a lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the centre of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders (5:6). But this time, he does not see a Lamb in the midst of the throne. He also does not see the one who was portrayed in Zechariah 9:9, coming in humility, riding on the colt, the foal of a donkey, which was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem, known as the triumphal entry. Here in Revelation, John saw a white horse and its rider. Here the image is that of a Roman conqueror who is coming back in a triumphal procession, riding on a white horse. White is not only the color of war chargers, in the ancient Roman world, but here on top of that, it is the symbol of purity, it is the symbol of spotlessness, of unblemished holy power. The image of a white horse and its rider is that of the conqueror, different from other earthly conquerors who comes out of covetousness, ambition, pride, or the love of power. He comes to destroy the corrupt evil power of the world.

And its rider is called Faithful and True. We are familiar with the words, “Faithful and True.” The risen Christ appeared to the church in Laodicea as Amen, the faithful and true witness (Rev. 3:14). He is so faithful and true that here he is called Faithful and True. He is faithfulness and truth personified. “Faithful and True” is certainly in vivid contrast to the unfaithfulness and the lying hypocrisy of the Antichrist and Satan. He is faithful to his promises. He is faithful to whatever he promises, and he speaks only the truth. He promised he would come and he comes, here.

Then verse 11 says continually, “With justice he judges and makes war.” In another translation, “In righteousness he judges and makes war.” His coming purpose is clearly written. He comes to judge and make war. People of the world have been longing for justice. And here he comes to judge and make war with justice. Isaiah described the coming Messiah in Isaiah 11:3-5: “He will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breadth of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist” (Isa. 11:3-5). Faithfulness, trueness, justice and righteousness are his characters. Once he came as Saviour. Then he will come as Judge. When he was here the first time, wicked men judged him. When he comes the second time, he will judge the wicked men. He comes to make war and fight to destroy the unrighteous kingdom of the world and establish his just and righteous kingdom.

Then verse 12 says, “His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns.” With his blazing fire-like eyes, he sees in and out, penetrating into the heart and mind of men. Nothing can be hidden and remain covered and concealed. He cannot be deceived by anyone. This is written in Revelation 1:14 as one description of the glorious risen Christ is, “his eyes were like blazing fire.” This is also written in 2:18, where to the angel of the church in Thyatira the risen Jesus appeared as the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze (2:18) And the risen Christ said, “I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds” (2:23). He is the mind and heart searcher with his blazing fire-like eyes. To judge rightly, he has to see everything. He has to sound the depths of every heart. He has to see behind every mask, under every façade.

In verse 12, it is written “And on his head are many crowns.” Many diadēma, many king’s crowns, ruler’s crowns are on his head. This speaks of his royal rank and regal authority. It’s the idea that he has collected all the crowns and they all lie on His head because nobody else rules any place. Here is the ultimate symbol of sovereignty. All the crowns are on one head. In 12:3, it says“The great red dragon had seven heads and ten horns and on his heads were seven crowns.” This dragon is Satan (12:9). And in 13:1, it says “And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He has ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns.” As we studied, this beast is the Antichrist. By the way setting crowns being set on one’s head was a custom in the ancient world. When Ptolemy conquered Antioch, he set two crowns on his head, the crown of Asia and the crown of Egypt, signifying the comprehensive nature of his rule. But the day is coming when all the kings will yield their crowns. Satan will yield his crown and antichrist will yield his crowns and the rulers of the world will yield their crowns, and all the crowns will be on the head of Jesus.

We again are reminded of 11:15, “The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.” We find a fair exchange. While he was in the world, he had a crown of thorns on his head. Then he comes with many crowns on his head, as the kingdom of the world has become his kingdom with his eternal rule. What an exchange!

And verse 12 continues, “He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself.” There is an incomprehensibility to the character of God that perhaps even an eternally glorified human will never know. Here John is saying is there’s something about Him that is way beyond anything we can ever comprehend. There is a profound nature in the Lord Jesus Christ that is comprehensible only to God. Here comes the incomprehensible One. How humble we should be before him!

Then verse 13 says, “He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.” It is written in Isaiah 63:3, “I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing.” This verse implies that his garments have been spattered with blood for a long time. Here the expression, “he is dressed in a robe dipped in blood” indicates that he has been in battles in history and his robe was dipped in the blood of his enemies, showing himself as a fighter. Dressed in a robe dipped in blood, he will go into the final battle.

In verse 13, it says “his name is the Word of God.” John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” And John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The Word of God is none other than the second member of the trinity, Christ, the incarnate God. He is the expression of God, He is the revelation of God, He’s the declaration of God. He is the One in whom we hear God speak and see God act. He is the full expression of the mind and the will and the purpose of God. He is God’s Word. According to Hebrews 1:3, he is the exact representation of God. Though his coming with a bloody robe, this is the coming of God. He is a warrior God (Ex. 15:3).

So when we think of the returning Christ, he is pure, conquering, faithful, truthful, righteous, victorious, majestic, glorious, awesome, wonderful, fearsome, and mighty. Isaiah 64:1-2 says, “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you!” This is Isaiah’s prayer that God would rend the heavens and come down. What Isaiah anticipated and prayed for now unfolds in Revelation 19 as heaven is opened and a white horse and its rider are seen. Daniel saw his coming and said in 7:13, “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.” The Lord Jesus said of his own coming in Matthew 24:30, “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.” Apostle John testified to his coming at the very beginning chapter of Revelation, “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all peoples of the earth will mourn because of him” (1:7). All these promises are fulfilled in chapter 19 and will come true in history. He comes with justice and power and great glory to judge and make war.

How he fights is described in verses 14 and 15: “The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike the nations…” Here are a similarity and contrast of the armies of heaven to him, the rider on the white horse. They were also riding on white horses, indicating that they are the pure and holy people of the Lord. But they were dressed in fine linen, white and clean, while the Lord was dressed in a robe dipped in blood.

Then in verse 15, “Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike the nations...” Here we see that his followers do not need to fight. He himself fights with the sword of his mouth. According to Isaiah 11:4, “He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breadth of his lips he will slay the wicked.” When John depicted the risen glorious Christ in chapter 1, it is written, “Out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword” (1:16). And to the church in Pergamum the risen Christ appeared as one who has the sharp, double-edged sword” (2:12). Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” And according to Ephesians 6:17, the word of God is the sword of the Spirit.” And as we thought of, “his name is the Word of God.” Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword which is the word of God. This sword of God’s word is the sword of the Holy Spirit, that is his unique potent weapon that strikes and defeats any of his enemies. May we also firmly believe that the word of God is our potent weapon in our spiritual warfare.

The battle will be done swiftly. So verse 15 says continually, “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” This is a quotation from Psalm 2:9, which is concerning the Messiah’s ruling. And this expression is written 3 times in Revelation (2:26-27; 12:4). The risen Christ promised this ruling to the church in Thyatira saying in 2:26, “To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.” And it is written in 12:5, “…a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” His ruling and reign is assured in his instant and swift judgment. And his instant, swift, certainly righteous judgment will be the characteristic of the rule and the reign of Jesus Christ. His saints will rule together with him.

Verse 15 continues, “He treads the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.” This is a vivid picture of complete judgment after the defeat of his enemies. We remember what is written in 14:20, “They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.”

Then verse 16 says, “On his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” It is also written in 17:14, “They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will over come them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings.” This name is doubly written in Revelation. What a fitting final name given to the returning Christ! Although he has an unknow name, what is known about him is this. He is called Faithful and Ture. His name is the Word of God. The name, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, is written on his robe and on his thigh. God is the God of truth (Isa. 65:16). The returning Christ is the King of truth as he testified before Pilate at the time of trial, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into this world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” He will come according to his promise and the promises of the Scriptures and fight with the sword of God’s word of truth and defeat all the untruthful kings and lords and rule with justice and righteousness.

**Second, the defeat of the Antichrist (17-21).** In verses 17-18, “And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ‘Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.’” What an interesting supper it is, the great supper of God, enjoyed by the birds of the air. This makes a contrast to the wedding supper of the Lamb. The wedding supper of the Lamb is a time of joy and rejoicing, a time of reward and blessing, and the great supper of God, a time of terrifying feasting with dead bodies.

The prophet Ezekiel was given insight into such an event that was to come at the end time. Ezekiel 39:17-18 says, “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: ‘Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood. You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth…” Even Jesus spoke this in Matthew 24:27-28, “For as lighting that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.” Also, Luke records Jesus’ teaching in Luke chapter 17, that at the time of the coming of the Son of man, the same kind of thing is going to happen: “Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather” (Lk. 17:37). All these words of prophecies assure the returning of the Lord Jesus and his final victory.

Interestingly, it is said that far more Israeli pilots have been killed by birds than by enemies throughout the history of the Israeli air force. And one of the most frightening realities in the Israeli air force is the occasion when a bird goes right through the plexiglass in a cockpit of a jet and takes the head of the pilot. And it has happened frequently, right up until now.

Now verses 19 says, “Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army.” This one verse is actually the battle at Armageddon. And the result is written in verses 20 and 21, which says, “But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.” Any place separated from the presence of God is a hell of some kind, but this is the final form of that hell, and the first two to populate it are the Antichrist and the false prophet. The battle seemed to finish very quickly, probably in an hour. It was likely a one-sided battle with Christ’s decisive victory and the powerless defeat of the beast and the false prophet. Why? We find the words “false” and “delude” in regard to the beast and his followers. Their weapon was deception and delusion and falsity, while Christ’s weapon was the truth of God’s word. We learn that falsity and deception do not have ultimate power, while the word of God’s truth does.

Thank God for our Lord Christ Jesus, who is coming as King of kings and Lord of lords with power and great glory to judge and fight. With the assurance of his final victory may we join in the battle of the truth for his kingdom.