

Text: Rev. 19:11-16

Title: "He is coming again!" – Part Three

Time: 9/2/2018 am & 9/9/2018

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Have you ever heard the old adage, that you never get a second chance to make a first impression? I have found that to be true at times. The first impression we make on people is certainly an important one.

I can remember the first impression I made on one of the early leaders of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America. That is a fellowship of independent Baptist churches that I have been a member of for many years now, and I thank the Lord for the encouragement and instruction I have received from these fellow pastors.

So I have had sweet fellowship with this now elderly brother for many years, yet I regret the first impression I made on him. It happened in New Haven, CT when I was serving the Lord as an assistant pastor at the Baptist Church of Danbury. I had been asked to fill the pulpit of a friend who was planting a church in New Haven under missionary status.

I had never been to New Haven before, and I did not give myself enough time to find the inner-city home where the church met for Sunday worship, so I was a good 20 minutes late to the service. I have had recurring nightmares from time to time about being late to preach ever since. Well, that was bad enough, but what made it worse was that the head of the mission board also happened to be there that morning, this early leader of the IBFNA. Unexpectedly for him, he had his hands full keeping things going until the preacher showed up.

So that was the very first impression he got of me, that I was irresponsible and not to be trusted with pulpit supply, and that was an impression that I think affected our relationship for some time.

Our appearance can also affect someone's impression of us. In our passage there are a number of things that impress us about the glory of Christ's second coming. We learn of names that tell us of that glory, and we have spent some time together considering the glory

of these. He is named *Faithful and True* and has a name that no one knows but himself; His name is *the Word of God* and *the King of kings and Lord of lords*.

This morning, I would like for us to notice how the appearance of the coming Christ displays His glory as He comes. We are given some important details of this appearance in verses 11-13.

I. The names of the coming Christ.

II. The appearance of the coming Christ.

1. He appears in heaven v. 11.

Illustration: Another adage that we have heard is that we must not be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good. Perhaps you have heard that one. The idea was the theme of a 1977 Jonny Cash song called, "No Earthly Good." Cash was a professing believer from his early youth, but when he became a famous country-music singer, the fame and fortune brought with it alcohol and drug addiction, adultery, and the consequent divorce from his first wife, Vivian. Vivian raised their four daughters on her own. It was a few years after all those tragic experiences that Cash wrote this song warning against being so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good.

Application: One of the things I have noticed as a student of the Bible is the fact that nowhere in it can you find any concern that a sinner is going to be too heavenly minded to be any earthly good. In fact, what we actually find is that the opposite is true. Scripture everywhere warns us against being so earthly minded that we are no heavenly good. Given Cash's experiences, it seems like that would have been a better theme for his song. He was not heavenly minded enough to be of any earthly good to his wife and kids, let alone to his Savior.

Paul exhorts us in Col. 3:1-4, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead [dead people are certainly no earthly good!],

and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." We are the people of the glory of heaven; we should not be living like people of the earth around us. This must be true of us if we are to be of any earthly good the way the apostle Paul was.

Heaven is mentioned some 55 times in the Book of Revelation. Sometimes it refers to the atmosphere or outer-space, but often it refers to the place mentioned in our first verse this morning. What Revelation teaches us about heaven is that everything that shall determine the future of everything on earth comes from heaven. Heaven is where the action is, not earth. This is because heaven is where Christ is. Do we believe that? Are we heavenly minded enough to be some earthly good by telling others that truth? When Christ comes, the heavens open. Angels of the Book of Revelation have been sent from heaven (10:1, 14:17, 18:1), some of whom were illustrations of Christ, but what we read about here is on a different scale. Jesus does not just come from heaven when He comes again. Heaven opens before Him. When He comes again, heaven comes down to earth, because the Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land. Let's reflect His glory as His people who are heavenly minded enough to be much earthly good.

The Puritans of old told us two important things to do in order to become heavenly minded. They said we needed much Scriptural meditation. Ps. 1:2 tells us this is so, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Then the Puritans also talked about what they called "occasional meditation." That is the ability to find heavenly truth illustrated in mundane earthly things. Jesus did this when He called His disciples attention to flowers and noted that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. God cares for the grass, and He will care for us too. Jesus was very heavenly minded and very much earthly good. We need this Christlikeness.

2. He appears sitting on a white horse v. 11.

Illustration: I think for some of us here this morning, this glorious detail of the appearance of the coming Christ is our favorite. We love some horse-lovers in our family in Christ here at New Boston

Baptist Church. Now while I would caution against concluding from this detail that there are dogs and cats and other animals in heaven, I must admit plainly that I am not sure how the horse got in heaven. Perhaps the existence of animals in some incorruptible form will be one of the many things that surprise me when I am in glory someday, as some of you have suggested.

Application: What I do know about this horse, however, is that it is very different than the animal Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the week of His crucifixion. We read about that animal in our Scripture reading this morning (Matt. 21:1-16). In fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy (9:9), Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of the Jews, to be crucified by the religious establishment there, and to be praised by children. How different this scene is from the one that tells us of the Warrior-Rider of the white horse of Revelation 19.

Those who scorned Him while on the donkey will be destroyed by Him as He comes on the horse. What do you think of the King who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? Do you praise Him with child-like faith as the promised Son of David? Have you asked Him to save you from your sins? God could have only chosen one animal for His Son to ride, the warrior's white horse. Instead, He first sent Him to ride the donkey also and to die for our sins. What grace is this? How shall we escape if we reject this wondrous grace in our own unbelief?

3. He has eyes like a flame of fire v. 12.

Application: In chapter 1 we saw that when Christ appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos, John saw that His eyes were like a flame of fire (1:14b). The Bible has much to say about the eyes of the Lord. I will note three things about these eyes this morning:

(1) They are omniscient eyes. This means they see everything. Prov. 15:3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Heb. 4:13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." We do not hide from Him. We do not fool Him. His omniscient eyes have penetrating vision. 1 Sam. 16:7, "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the

Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." He sees our heart this morning. What does He find there? Whatever it is, He will hold us accountable for what He sees. It is not hidden from His sight.

(2) They are holy eyes. Hab. 1:13, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity [i.e., with approval or toleration]." Here the prophet speaks of the holiness of our God in terms of eyes that must look away. We know what that is like. Some things are so ugly, we have to look away (like the ankle injury of Celtic forward Gordon Hayward last season, when TV cameras looked away). This is God's nature in response to sin. He cannot stand the look of it. Our nature excuses, tolerates, and feels an attraction toward sin. God's nature cannot look upon it. He is holy, and as we grow in grace He wants us to grow in holiness. He wants us to be unable to look with approval or toleration on our sin.

(3) They are loving eyes. 1 Pet. 3:12, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." Zech. 2:8, "For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye.'" Our enemy Satan will soon find this to be true. As the redeemed of the Lord, we can pray confidently with the Psalmist, "Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings" (Ps. 17:8).

Illustration: We react with great urgency when we get something in our eyes. The Lord does not let that happen to the apple of His eye. His people are that apple.

Illustration: Hollywood uses eyes of fire as a symbol of demonic evil. The Bible has a different take on eyes of fire. Jesus's eyes are omniscient, penetrating, holy, and loving. And best of all, He looks at you and He looks at me.

Do you remember the day Sarah's maid found this to be true? We read about that in our Scripture reading this morning. Despised and destitute, discouraged and abandoned, Hagar came to understand that the God of the Bible is *El Roi*, *the God who sees*. The words "thou God seest me" were words of great hope and comfort and forgiveness for her.

Have they been for you and for me? Have we come to understand that He saw each of us in our sin and sorrow, and He died for us on the cross of Calvary to meet that need. He saw us and our sin when from the cross He said, "Father, forgive them." Have we seen that He did all that while looking at each of us in our need? He sees me with penetrating omniscience, with holiness, and because I am His by grace to repent from sin and believe in His work on the cross, He sees me with everlasting love as the apple of His eye. How does He see you?

#### 4. His head was crowned with many crowns v. 12.

Application: This crown is the diadem, the crown of monarchs. There are many of them on the head of the coming Christ. That is a difficult image to picture, but perhaps we are helped with our modern video technology. Maybe what John saw was one crown morphing into another crown on the head of the coming Christ many times over. The number of these crowns would correspond to the number of the nations referred to in verse 15. Not a single crown will be missing. Where there is a nation, Jesus will wear the crown of the king of that nation. Only then will politics be the answer to man's problems. Only then will righteousness and justice reign in the earth.

Illustration: I received an email from a pastor friend about the recent meeting that our president had with various evangelical leaders. He forwarded the news story to me because he was thankful for a number of the things that the president said, as he should be.

Application2: The Scripture indicates, however, that there will never be a nation on this earth that allows Jesus to rule it until He comes again and puts on the many crowns this passage mentions. The Psalmist is clear about this, "The kings of the earth take their stand; And the rulers take counsel together; Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!'" (Ps. 2:2-3). The kings of this earth will always be like that. They deserve our prayers, our obedience, and in our constitutional republic our informed accountability and vote. But never our faith or our hope. Only God's Anointed monarch, Jesus

the Messiah King, will bring true righteousness and justice in a political sense to the earth.

5. He wore a garment having been dipped into blood v. 13.

Application: Judgment passage like Isaiah 63:3 speak of the blood stains on the garment of Jehovah as he treads down grapes in the winepress of His judgment. We will read about a winepress later in our passage, but I want us to see that the blood on the garment of the coming Christ in this passage does not come from the winepress. John sees His garment having been stained that way in heaven, not in the winepress. The grammar tells us that it happened in the past with continuing results into the present. The blood stains John saw came not from the blood of the winepress, but of the cross. It is not the blood of humans trampled by His judgment, but His own blood that was shed when He was slaughtered for their sins in the grace and mercy of our holy God. Wherever man is judged for His sin in the book of Revelation, he is judged by the Lamb who shed His blood first that sinners like you and me might be saved from this coming judgment.

Conclusion: So why are so many judged for their sin in God's winepress rather than saved by Christ's blood shed on the cross? I think it may get back to what we said at the beginning this morning about first impressions. The appearance of Christ in Revelation 19 is not His first impression. The description of His appearance that we have in Isaiah 53 was. Let's read some of that description of His appearance together (vv. 1-3). In His first coming, the glory of Christ was veiled by the appearance of a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief - no form, no comeliness, no beauty that we should desire him. This is why He is despised and rejected of men.

But the passage goes on to describe how He was crucified for our sin to save us. Who has believed this report? Have you believed this report? If not, the Lord is graciously giving you another opportunity this morning to do so. How does He appear to you? Do you see that He worthy of your repentance from sin and trust for salvation? If not, you shall someday when He appears that second time in power and great glory, but then it will be too late. Now is the acceptable time. Today is the day of salvation.

III. The accomplishments of the coming Christ.

IV. The companions of the coming Christ.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*