

Text: Rev. 19:11-16

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

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Introduction: Last month NASA launched a device called the Parker Solar Probe. The plan is that, seven years from now, the probe will fly to within 4 million miles from the sun and help scientists further understand the glory of this creation of God, which is so very important to the sustenance of life on our own planet.

The sun is truly glorious. It is nearly a perfectly symmetrical sphere. It is a mega-power generator that converts 600 tons of hydrogen into helium per second, which equates to 4 million tons of matter converted to energy every second. It is big enough to hold about 1.3 million Earths. Its powerful gravitational field keeps the solar system together. Its solar winds travel at speeds of 280 miles per second. The corona or atmosphere of the sun is hotter than its surface because millions of nano-flares are exploding in it every second, each packing the punch of a 10 megaton hydrogen bomb.

Perhaps most glorious of all, the sun is in the exact place we need it to be to have ripe tomatoes this time of year. It brightens our day and warms our skin. It even provides us with some vitamin D. One correct way to think about the sun is the truth that it is tremendously destructive power harnessed in this mighty way to be a gentle blessing to you and to me each and every day. This too is its glory. Its glory points to the glory of its Creator.

We are in a passage of Scripture that tells us about the glory of the second coming of Christ. It is one of the last passages in the New Testament, and it parallels one of the last passages of the Old Testament, which also speaks of this second coming. That Old Testament passage does so by speaking of the glory of the second coming in terms of the glory of the sun (Mal. 4:1-3):

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”

To read about the second coming of Christ is to read about something tremendously glorious. The One who put the glorious sun in its place to rule the day, to give us light, and to mark our seasons, has also said that the Sun of righteousness is coming, and we need to understand His glory.

We are considering four aspects of the glory of Christ’s second coming from our passage together: His glorious names, His glorious appearing, His glorious accomplishments, and His glorious companions. This morning we will focus on the accomplishments.

I. The glorious names of the coming Christ.

1. “Faithful and True” v. 11.
2. A name which only He knows v. 12.
3. “The Word of God” v. 13.
4. “The King of kings and Lord of lords” v. 16.

II. The glorious appearance of the coming Christ.

1. He appears in heaven v. 11.
2. He appears sitting on a white horse v. 11.
3. His eyes are like a flame of fire v. 12.
4. His Head is crowned with many crowns v. 12.
5. He wears a garment having been dipped into blood v. 13.

III. The glorious accomplishments of the coming Christ.

1. The coming Christ judges in righteousness (vv. 11, 15). Note with me three phrases in this regard, “and in righteousness He doth judge and make war” (v. 11c); “And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations” (v. 15a); “and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (v. 15c).

Illustration: Last week two Myanmar journalists were sentenced by their court system to 7 years in prison. The Myanmar judge found them guilty of violating a law about state secrets because they reported on a massacre of ten Muslim men committed by the country’s security forces. Scott Marciel, our U.S. Ambassador to Myanmar, had this to say about the judge’s verdict: “I’m sad for Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo and their families, but also for Myanmar. It’s deeply troubling for everybody who has struggled so hard here for media freedom. I think one has to ask, will this process increase or decrease the confidence the people of Myanmar have in their justice system.”

Application: We live in a sinful world of corruptible justice systems. It is obvious to many that this Myanmar judge judged these two reporters in unrighteousness. One of the glorious accomplishments of the coming Christ is that He will judge the world in righteousness. The verdict He renders will be the right one. It will be the just one. We can have confidence in His justice system.

This Judge will not only render a righteous verdict; He also will execute a righteous sentence. Notice with me three things about the execution of this sentence of righteous judgment:

(1) He will make war to execute this sentence (v. 11a).

Application: Righteousness is at war with unrighteousness in our world. When we awake in the morning, we face an enemy that will fight for our destruction in unrighteousness that day. Do we know that we are on that battlefield? Do we see our need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might to face those battles of righteousness vs. unrighteousness every day?

When Christ comes, there will be a final battle between righteousness and unrighteousness. The coming Christ will not be interested in a peace treaty with unrighteousness. He will do battle with it; we should battle unrighteousness in our lives and our world, and not think we can make peace with it.

Illustration: The importance of seeing my life as lived on a spiritual battlefield first hit me as a high school teenager. I had heard that idea before, but I saw it for myself during a devotional time I had one afternoon in the Book of Romans. I was doing a verse by verse study of the book, and came then to 6:13, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

I looked up the word *instruments* in my Vines word-study book, and it told me that the word meant *weapon*. I realized that the Lord was telling me that every day my life is either a weapon of unrighteousness unto sin, or a weapon of righteousness unto God. There is really no middle ground of peace in this war. Unless I am weaponry for Christ and His kingdom, I am being used as a weapon against Him. Understanding that truth for the first time changed my life. Righteousness is at war with unrighteousness in our world. Whose side are we on?

(2) He will use a sword to execute this sentence (v. 15a).

Application: This word for *sword* refers to a large and broad sword. There are two words for *sword* in our New Testaments, a big one and a smaller one. This is the big one. Our text tells us it is sharp. In Rev. 1:16, we were told also that it is double-edged. Its destructive force proceeds not from our Lord's hand, but from His mouth. Those who die at the Battle of Armageddon do so because of this sword (19:21). So what is the sword?

Illustration: A verse of Luther's great hymn of the Protestant Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," interprets the sword as "one little word":

“And though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us.
We will not fear for God has willed His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him.
His rage we can endure, for lo his doom is sure.
One little word shall fell him.”

Certainly, the sword proceeding from Christ’s mouth reminds us of two passages that mention the other little sword in a metaphorical way. Paul tells us in Eph. 6:17 that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. And it was perhaps Luke who mentions in Hebrews (4:12) that the Word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. With this Word of God, which is Scripture, the little sword, we can fight our enemy and win battle after battle against Satan, the world, and our own flesh. Praise God for the many victories of this little sword.

But when the coming Christ speaks His one little word, it will be the complete end of these enemies. It will be the final victory. That will be the big sword, the final Word of God, that one little word fells them all. Just as it was the power of God’s Word that brought the sun and its universe into existence, so will it be the power of God’s Word that removes His enemies from it.

What did Luther say to do with this truth? “We will not fear.” “We tremble not for him.” “His rage we can endure.” Our world is filled with devils, which we must battle constantly with our little sword, the Scripture. But soon one little word, the big sword of the coming Christ, shall fell every enemy in an instant. Faith in that promise of final victory gives us the courage that conquers our fears in the many spiritual battles we face now.

(3) He will tread a winepress to execute this sentence (v. 15c).

Application: The winepress is Armageddon, described in the next paragraph, and prophesied in the Isaiah passage we read earlier (ch. 63). The antichrist, the kings of the earth, and their armies gather to make war against the coming Christ and His army (v. 19). This final rebellion will be put down. The rebellion of their unbelief meets the fierceness and wrath of Almighty

God. This is where the rebellion of unbelief always leads. Eventually, it runs into the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

As Pilate contemplated what to do with a beaten, battered, disfigured Jesus, he asked the Lord a question. He asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33). Jesus would explain, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (v. 36). Revelation 19 tells us about that fight, the day the kingdoms of this world do become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Pilate had a decision to make, just like every person who has lived since Jesus came the first time and was crucified, explaining that His kingdom was not yet of this world: believe Jesus and submit to Him as my king, or disbelieve Jesus and claim to be king of my own life.

Pilate disbelieved. Today, Pilate's rebellion of unbelief has met with the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. How will we decide? Will we believe that Jesus died to save us from sin? Will we believe that He is a king of a kingdom not yet of this world? Will we submit in faith and trust Him as our Savior? Or will we persist in the rebellion of unbelief, only to meet with our own Armageddon someday, the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God? Christ judges in righteousness.

2. The coming Christ rules in righteousness (v. 15b).

Application: The word for *rule* here is the verb *to shepherd*. In many Old Testaments passages, the civil leaders of Israel are called *shepherds*. The spiritual leaders were the prophets and priests, but the civil leaders were her shepherds, the kings and tribal elders.

God often had reason to condemn these shepherds of Israel. Jeremiah 23, for instance, begins with a word of judgment against the unfaithful shepherds of Israel (vv. 1-8) and ends with a word of judgment against her unfaithful prophets (vv. 9-40). In verse 5 of

that passage, the Lord prophesies a solution to the unfaithful-shepherd problem: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

And so here in Revelation 19:15 we read again about God's solution to the unfaithful-shepherd problem: the coming Christ shall shepherd them. The kings of the earth have set themselves against the God of heaven and His Messiah, even crucifying Him. In the end, Jesus still rules in righteousness.

The David mentioned by Jeremiah's prophecy spoke of God's rod of iron breaking the nations (Ps. 2:9; for Davidic authorship of Psalm 2, see Acts 4:25-26). But here we read not just of smitten nations, but of shepherded nations. His rod of iron used to shepherd them here is iron because it cannot be broken (compare Jeremiah's iron yoke in Jeremiah 28). His authority in the earth will no longer be challenged or overthrown.

Conclusion: The Psalmist David also spoke of this Shepherd as his own Shepherd in Psalm 23 ("The Lord is my Shepherd", v.1). He mentioned there that his Shepherd's rod was a great comfort to him. His Shepherd prepared a table before him in the presence of his enemies. He anointed his head with oil; his cup of blessing from his Shepherd was overflowing. He said, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." His Shepherd would give His life for His sheep and had given David forgiveness of sins and assurance of eternal life.

We do not get to decide whether the coming Christ is going to be this future Shepherd who judges and rules in righteousness. But like David, each of us must decide whether this coming Christ will be "my Shepherd" as He was for David. Can you call Him that? Is He your shepherd?

Conclusion: If so, let me encourage you as we close with one more amazing truth about His rule with a rod of iron: He plans for faithful members of local churches to rule with Him. This was His promise to the local church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:26-27, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall shepherd them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father").

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