

Text: Rev. 19:11-16

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

Time: 9/23/2018

Place: NBBC

Introduction: Tree branches are something that we are very familiar with in New Hampshire. I am told that it is the job of the branch to get its leaves into as much sunlight as possible so that the photosynthesis the tree depends on can occur. Gravity and wind also affect the tree, and so branch growth involves a trade-off between optimizing its sunlight and remaining stable around the tree's trunk. The branch has sensors that enable it to balance that trade-off.

Branches of trees have two categories of bark, outer bark and inner bark. The outer bark is its defense against the elements, and the inner bark is a massive plumbing system that transports sugar and nutrients from a tree's leaves and buds to the other parts of the tree.

Inside the bark the branch of a tree contains a layer of cells (the cambium) that can divide into either inner wood cells or inner bark cells as needed. The inner growth produces wood cells that bring water and minerals up from a tree's roots, and the outer growth can heal wounds and wall off infected or rotted parts of a tree as bark. The branch's base contains a protection zone with fungicidal materials.

So even the technology of a tree branch is a glorious product of our Creator.

We are in a passage of Scripture that tells us about the glory of the second coming of Christ. We noted last week that the Old Testament prophet Malachi pictured the glory of this second coming as a rising sun. This morning we read

how the prophet Isaiah describes it as the glory of growing branch:

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse (King David’s father), and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked” (Isa. 11:1-4).

To read about the second coming of Christ is to read about something tremendously glorious. The One who crafted the glorious technology of the tree branch has also said that the Branch that comes from Jesse’s family tree is coming again, and we need to understand how He will come in great 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 this morning, His glorious companions.

## 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. He judges in righteousness v. 11, 15.
2. He rules in righteousness v. 15.

## IV. The glorious companions of the coming Christ.

1. They are clothed in garments white and clean (v. 14).

Illustration: One of my favorite pictures of my son Kent was taken on one of our more notorious church work days. It was the workday after the tree roots had been extracted from our eastern hill, and Kent is standing in the middle of the muck left behind, covered from head to toe in mud, holding one of the many rocks he was pulling out of that mushy mess that day. Honestly, as I look carefully at the picture and notice the look in Kent's eyes, it does kind of seem as though he is thinking about throwing that rock at me as I was taking his picture. Not sure.

Application: A similar picture was taken by the prophet Zechariah of the high priest of his day, Joshua, and it turns out that the passage also mentions the coming of Christ in terms of a Branch (Zech. 3:1-8). So the salvation of Joshua from subservience to Satan and from his own sinful iniquity is described as the removal of Joshua's filthy garments

and his being clothed in a change of raiment. This is a beautiful picture of the inception of spiritual life in a spiritually dead sinner in the new birth. Being born again is like exchanging filthy garments for raiment that is fine-linen, clean and white.

We saw this picture in verse 8 of our chapter (Revelation 19), where the description of the Bride of Christ includes the truth that it was given her to be clothed in fine linen, clean and bright. The text explains there that these garments are the righteous deeds of the saints, and those righteous deeds are actually works accomplished by the King of saints in Rev. 15:3-4, which are celebrated by the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

The first righteous deed celebrated by the song of Moses is Jesus's active obedience – the obedience of His sinless life before God's law, which came through Moses. The Lamb is without spot or blemish. The second righteous act celebrated by the song of the Lamb is Jesus's passive obedience – His willingness to go to the cross in spite of His sinlessness and die in our place to atone for our sins. The Lamb is a sacrifice. These are the two righteous acts of the saints—the sinlessness of the Lamb and the sacrifice of the Lamb. And so the companions of the coming Christ are clothed in fine linen, white and clean, the righteous life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who atones for our sins.

Remember here that Jesus's garment is not white and clean. It is red, having been dipped into the blood of Calvary. You and I can be white and clean, all of our sins, past, present, and future, washed away, because Jesus was stained with the blood of Calvary as the sinless, spotless, Lamb of God.

Rev. 19:8 tells us that this is a gift accepted by His Bride ("it was granted"). Have you accepted that gift? Have you been

forgiven before God? Are your garments white and clean, the work of Christ in your behalf? They can be. Simply turn from your sin and receive the gift of garments, white and clean.

2. They follow their King (v. 14).

Illustration: Do you remember what the Lord told Joshua after giving him his change of garments? Zech. 3:7, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by."

Application: Here our King refers to what He calls "My ways," "My charge," "My house," and "My courts." Joshua was to walk in His ways, keep His charge, judge His house, and keep His courts. If he did so faithfully, there would be a place for him among the heavenly beings that stood by and had given him his new garments. Let's take some time to think about these responsibilities one at a time.

(1) To walk in our King's ways is to obey the commands He has issued to all His subjects. It is to sanctify Him as Lord of our hearts and to follow what He says. It is obedience.

(2) To keep our King's charge is to fulfill the specific calling He has laid on each of us. It is my charge to be Maureen's husband, the father of Brandon, Carrie, Kara, and Kent, and a faithful member of New Boston Baptist Church. I am your pastor because I have a charge from our King that I must keep. It is faithfulness.

(3) To judge our King's house in our day and age is to recognize that the local church is God's house, that it has authority over our lives, and that we have a responsibility to-

ward that authority in our spiritual care for one another. It is local-church membership.

(4) To keep our King's courts is to be faithful in our assembling to worship. The court of Joshua's temple was the place of corporate worship. Our King is worthy of worship, so we make sure the Lord's Day is His day and not our own, and that we faithfully assemble to worship our worthy King.

The companions of the coming Christ follow their King. They walk in His ways, they keep His charge, they judge His house, and they worship in His courts. Using this criteria, can we say we are companions of the coming Christ? Would He say so? Would others say so?

Jesus was clear about who His companions are: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you" (John 15:14). If our disobedience to His commands say that we possess only a false claim to be Jesus's friends, we need to ask for His forgiveness and trust Him for strength and power to make our claim to be His friends genuine and life-changing.

3. They fight with their King (v. 14; "armies"; "white horses").

Application: The companions of the coming Christ are mounted on white horses like He is. They are the armies of the King of heaven.

We often distinguish between the church militant and the church triumphant as we think about the doctrine of the church. That idea is a good one, because it reminds us that the difficult spiritual warfare that we face day in and day

out in this life will come to an end for us when we go to glory someday. The saints who have gone there before us are glorified in the presence of the Savior. They no longer face the struggles of the slow growth of sanctification into Christlikeness, nor the hostility of the world in which we battle to make disciples for Christ.

But there is a sense in which even the church in glory is still awaiting the end of battle and final victory. They seem to be aware that many wrongs have yet to be made right. John's vision of the 5th seal, which described martyrs from the tribulation period in glory, seems to indicate that even believers there are still awaiting a final victory over the enemy (Rev. 6:9-11). So in that sense, both the church on earth and the church in glory are together the church militant until this final battle.

This will be the last battle of spiritual warfare. We will fight with our King in that final battle, and then the war will be forever over, and our King and His army will be forever victorious. And so the companions of the coming King are His soldiers, who trust Him faithfully for the fulfillment of the promise of this final victory. Every battle we face now will be worth it all then.

Conclusion: Am I a soldier of the cross? That is a question each of us must answer for himself, and we have a hymn in our hymnal that helps us search our heart in that regard, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?"

“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*