

Newsletter December 2018

This December newsletter is in contrast to the celebration this month by Christians worldwide of the Lord's first advent nearly two thousand years ago. In that first advent, God had taken on human flesh in the womb of a human mother so that through his incarnation He may visit and walk among men. When He came at that time, it was to offer forgiveness, and to provide atonement through his own sacrificial death presented as an offering for mankind's sin. He came to his own people, the Jews, but their rulers belittled and forcibly rejected Him. Yet, the very Roman cross on which they had condemned Him to die became the crude instrument through which forgiveness and atonement was made possible for many, both Jew and Gentile. Through his resurrection from the dead on the third day, He provided justification to all who had and would in the future believe in Him.

Although the number of the redeemed, making up his Church, has increased over the past two centuries, the greater masses of the world's population have scorned, hated, and violently opposed Him. Before his ascension into Heaven, Jesus promised to return to earth at a time known only to his Father. When He returns, He will not come as a baby and a mortal man as He appeared in his first advent, but as the glorified Christ and Almighty God to decimate his enemies and cleanse the world to make way for his heavenly Kingdom to be established upon the earth. Scripture depicts a frightful severe judgment of the reprobate populace living on earth during that time, and for that reason, it may be hard for today's shallow naive Christian to contemplate. Be that as it may, Christ's second advent is the main topic of this newsletter article, and its profound message must be heeded.

Beginning in Chapter 16 of the Revelation and continuing on through Chapter 18, we observed the terrifying consequences that had fallen upon reprobate earth dwellers as seven angels poured out seven bowls of God's undiluted wrath. Here in Chapter 19, the scene changes from the darkness of earth to the brightness of Heaven, to the very throne room of God, as John observes the activities of the blessed residents of Heaven during this same period. While the unrepentant earth dwellers had blasphemed God, even as they had suffered death, the multitudes of Heaven had rejoiced.

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever” (Re.19:1-3).

“After these things” refers to that which John had seen in Chapter 16 through 18. Now he hears the loud voices of many people in heaven praising God, and attributing salvation, glory, honor, and power to Him alone. The word translated “people” found here is *ochlos* in the Greek, which describes a vast throng of people. This group of worshipers are not angels, but human men and women who have received salvation through Christ. They now declare that God's judgments are true and righteous in having judged Babylon, the great religious harlot that had corrupted the earth with her satanic fornication. In judging her, God had avenged the blood of his bond servants, whom she had wickedly branded as false witnesses and heretics for their witness of Christ, and she had ordered them to be put to death at her bidding. The people again cried out *alleluia*, as the smoke from Babylon's eternal judgment forever rose up to Heaven out of the fires of her destruction.

“And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Re,19:4-6).

Here, we return with John to the throne-room of God in Heaven, where we again see the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, which we first saw in Chapter 4, serving before the throne. They echo their amen to that of this great human throng, as they praise God and fall down before the throne to worship Him. The voice ringing out of the throne must be a subordinate created intelligence inasmuch as he implores all creation to praise God who is a being apart from the voice itself. Most likely it is the voice of an archangel whom God has permitted to deliver this message. The voice from the throne was followed by the unified voice of a great multitude of all angelic beings that faithfully serve God. Again, we find that their praise is as if were coming from a mighty waterfall punctuated by thundering crashes. Out of this great cacophony of voices is heard their

united and repeated thundering cries of “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” All the false religion and evil worship imposed by the great harlot, who has dared to thwart his will on earth, has been totally crushed.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Re.19:7,8).

John’s attention is now directed by the voice out of the throne toward the Son of God. The angelic hosts are enjoined to acknowledge the high honor the Father has conferred upon Him through the Church, which consists of all the people that Jesus, the slain Lamb, has redeemed to the Father through his blood. Here, the Church is referred to as the “Lamb’s wife,” not as his bride, such that her marriage to the lamb has “now come.” “Now come” is *erchomai* in the Greek; the tense of this verb as it is used here indicates that the marriage has already taken place in Heaven. When it is said that “his wife hath made herself ready,” it means that she has prepared herself to accept her duties of the beloved wife of the Lamb, not that she has done anything to make herself righteous or deserving of that high privilege. She has been granted the exclusive right of being dressed in clean white linen denoting her righteous state: “for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” The redeemed of the saints within the Church are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, which has been imputed to them through God’s grace alone.

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” (Re.19:9).

While the marriage took place in Heaven, it appears that the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place on the earth at the very beginning of the millennial age. This is pictured in Matthew 25:1-13, as ten virgins awaiting the coming of the bridegroom. The ten virgins are the invited guests of the bridegroom called upon to honor the bride; they are not the bride who will come with Him. The guests will consist of Old-Testament saints including the remnant of Israel, as well as a great number of redeemed Gentiles who through God’s abounding grace will have survived his wrath to enter into the Kingdom age. It may be that the marriage supper is not a brief sit-down affair, but is actually the continual personal fellowship the guests will enjoy with Jesus throughout the Millennial age. The previously unseen voice apparently emerged out of the throne when he said to John, “These are the true sayings of God,” thus placing God’s Word as a seal upon the proceedings.

“And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it not*: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Re.19:10).

John does not describe the appearance of this objectification of the voice for us, but he apparently was so stunned by his sudden appearance and the authoritative words that he spoke, that he involuntarily “fell at his feet to worship him.” This brought forth an immediate rebuke, as the being told him that he was a fellowservant of God and was of his brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. On the surface, this would seem to imply that he was a fellow Christian associated with the Church, but he seems to deny that notion when he further states that John should only worship God: for the “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” When a Christian hears the “testimony of Jesus,” the primary thought is our witnessing of Him to a lost world, but that misses the point here. Here it is Jesus’ prophetic witnessing to the Truth of God’s Word regarding all things that must come to pass regarding Himself as He returns to judge and rule the earth (cf. Re. 19:9).

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God” (Re.19:11-13).

When John rises to his feet, he sees Heaven open up before his eyes, and coming out of that opening a white horse appears. A white horse in the Scriptures is an animal symbolizing majesty and warfare. The Antichrist was earlier symbolized as a rider upon a white horse as he attempted to emulate the coming Messiah. This rider is Jesus the true Messiah who had once rode a humble donkey of peace as He presented Himself in Jerusalem before his crucifixion. This same Jesus, now glorified, rides the majestic white horse of war as He returns to powerfully judge the earth. There has been no specific heavenly sign preceding his second coming, as was the

case when He had earlier called down for his Church to meet Him in the air (cf. Mt.24:29,30). We have read, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Re. 16:15). Jesus now arrives on earth as unexpectedly as a thief in the night to all but a company of Jews and Gentiles who have been watching for Him. Clothed in his righteousness through unmerited grace, they will bear no shame at his appearing.

Jesus is here called "faithful and true;" faithful to his divine nature and true to his divine mission, inasmuch as his very word is Truth. In righteous anger, Jesus now comes forth to judge the inhabitants of earth through a massive slaughter at Armageddon, the likes of which the earth has never before experienced. Jesus' eyes are as flaming fire as He seeks out his enemies (cf. Re.1:14). On his head are many crowns taken from all of the kingdoms that are and had ever existed upon the earth. All Kingdoms of the earth are now his and his alone to claim, rule over, and to judge (cf. Re.11:15).

He has a name written down that only He knows. We knew Him here on earth as Jesus, He was called Emanuel, and He referred to Himself as the son of man. John the Apostle referred to Him as the Word, and the Son of God, but all of these names fall short of his real divine identity. This name that He alone knows is a unique name that is so sacred that only deity can understand and lay claim to it. Even throughout the depths of eternity mankind will never be able to fathom that name or fully understand its profound meaning.

Jesus is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. His garment had become sprinkled with the blood of his enemies as He treads the great winepress of God in the fierce slaughter of Armageddon (cf Re.16:16). "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs" (Re. 14:20).

Jesus' mysterious name, although unknown to any but Himself, is nevertheless directly equated with the Word of God. This takes us back to John 1:1,2,14 where we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

We find an early prophetic account of this majestic return of Christ to claim and to judge the earth in the book of Psalms that is so descriptive that we include it here:

"Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O *most* mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir (Ps. 45:3-9)

In this passage we see God the Father speaking to God the Son. "Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever ... therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The last sentence of this text speaks of the bridesmaids of honor that are present at Jesus' marriage in the ivory palaces of Heaven to the Church, which is here referred to as his Queen standing upon his right hand and beautifully dressed in golden attire from the eastern region of Ophir.

"And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Re.19:14-16).

It is commonly assumed that these armies are made up of angels. While that is possible, the description given here of those armies suggest that all or at least some of these armies consist of immortal glorified saints, who are clothed in clean white linen. Moreover, it is not known elsewhere that angels, who are spirit beings, ever ride upon horses. This interpretation is also supported by a verse found in First Thessalonians, "To the end

he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints**" (1Th. 3:13, emphasis added).

The sharp sword going forth from Jesus' mouth is the Word of God that afflicts the nations on earth with Truth (cf. Re.1:14). He shall also rule over the nations with a "rod of iron" (cf. Ps. 2:6-9, 27). This is a chastening rod that will be severely used to establish his absolute authority and to ensure ridged obedience. In connection with this rod we find that it is first established by executing the fierceness and wrath of God here within the battle of Armageddon as He treads his enemies under his feet in the long winepress of God (cf. Re. 14:19,20; Is 63:1-6). Up until this time, Jesus has been treading the winepress of God all alone (cf. Is. 63:5), but now He has come with the massive armies of Heaven as He finishes his work in the valley of Har-Magedo.

Jesus has a name written on the thigh of his vesture that identifies Him as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." All the Kingdoms of the earth will now be gathered into one universal kingdom ruled by Jesus Christ, and all of God's authority will be concentrated in his Lordship over all the peoples on earth.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men, both free and bond, both small and great*" (Re.19:17,18).

John sees an angel standing in the Sun. The Greek word here is *hēlios*, which can be translated "sun" or a similarly "bright light." The angel is standing in an intense brightness above the earth as he shouts down to invite all the fowls that fly in the atmosphere to gather themselves together for a great feast. This is a loathsome and offensive thing to contemplate, but it tells us just how much God despises the sinful nonredeemable flesh of the unrepentant reprobate: The fowl are invited to eat the flesh of kings, captains, and the flesh of mighty men and even the flesh of horses as their riders are slaughtered. Social station of life will not be differentiated, as the flesh of all men both free and bond, both small and great, are turned into carrion for the vultures of the earth.

Here again, we are faced with the question of whether these are literal horses. In an earlier description (cf. Re. 9:17) they were described as extraordinary "horses" that excluded them from being of the common equine variety. We speculated then that they could possibly be some sort of advanced mechanized instruments of war – or perhaps demonic hybrids of actual horses. Here, we discover that they are of actual animal flesh on whose carcasses birds of prey will feast. Therefore, these are almost certainly literal horses – albeit a satanic hybrid sub-species genetically altered and developed by demons.

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Re.19:19-21).

John saw the Antichrist and the kings of the earth at his command along with their armies gathered together to make war against Jesus Christ. All but the Antichrist and the False Prophet were summarily slain by the sword that proceeded out of the mouth of Christ. This sword is the powerful Word of God. Under the command of Jesus Christ, all the combatants of the earthly armies will suddenly die where they stand and their horses along with them. The vultures and every other carrion-eating bird will then fall upon their dead flesh and gorge themselves until they are fully satisfied. Thus will the earth be cleansed of the decaying bodies of those inhabitants who had opposed God and his Christ. Antichrist and the False Prophet were both captured and cast alive into the Lake of Fire that burned with brimstone. These two are the first to enter Hell that had long awaited them. They will soon be joined by a massive number of resurrected dead, who must first stand before the Great White Throne to receive their just eternal sentence of damnation, before they then follow the Antichrist and the False Prophet into Hell.

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