

Study 40: Revelation 19:14-21

14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

- I'm glad that I have an army in heaven fighting on my side. I think of the story of Elisha and his assistant in the Old Testament.

Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6:14-17).

- The Lord opened the servant's eyes so that he could see reality. Do your eyes need to be opened? Are you focusing on how bad things are in the natural? Are you "surrounded" by things that are trying to bring you down? The answer may be for you to see spiritual reality. There is an army, the army of God, that is fighting for you and this army is following Jesus, our Captain!
- This army is dressed in white and riding a white horse. They are holy and in one accord with Jesus. They cannot fail in their mission. What are you concerned about?

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39).

- So, what can separate you from the love of God? The only person is **you!** Decide today to stay connected to God's love. Those who are for you and more than those against you!

15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

- This is the third reference in Revelation to ruling with an "iron scepter." (see also Revelation 2:27 and 12:5). Why is the concept of Jesus ruling with an iron scepter so important?
- This iron scepter is first mentioned in Psalm 2:

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters. The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him (Psalm 2:1-12).

- Iron always represents strength, and is made from a combination of natural resources in intense heat. The Lamb, who is gracious and kind to His people, will rule His enemies with firmness and authority. He will break seemingly powerful kingdoms like pottery.
- Someone knowledgeable of the Old Testament reading Revelation 19:15 would understand that this iron scepter referred to Psalm 2, which is a psalm promising victory of God and His Son over any and all who opposed. Psalm 2 also appealed for God's enemies to repent and make peace with God, or else risk destruction.
- That is why the Church of Jesus is to engage in missions and outreach to the nations, to save them from the wrath of God that comes upon any and all who do not acknowledge God's ownership of the earth, its people and all its institutions.
- Are you asking God for the nations as an inheritance? If not, you should be as directed in Psalm 2. What nation would you like to pray for?

- There is also a sharp sword coming out of Jesus' mouth. For His enemies this is the sword of destruction. For those who know Him, it is a surgical instrument as described in Hebrews 4:

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. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Hebrews 4:12-16).

- While the word is compared to a sword, notice how it is described in the context of Jesus being such a gentle and patient High Priest, as we discussed in the previous study. Jesus uses His word not to destroy us but to build us up and to draw us to Him. When our motives and thoughts are revealed to be less than God's will, we can draw near to find help and grace. Jesus' sword cuts and destroys those who don't know Him, but the same sword is a tool of God's grace for those who do. Hallelujah!

16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

- This seems to have been Jesus seal or logo, the title that would set him apart from all the other leaders of the earth. He is not a peer of the kings of the earth; He stands out as supreme.
- When Jesus walked the earth, He was meek and lowly, difficult to distinguish from others in the crowd. Judas had to kiss Him so that the soldiers coming to arrest Him would know who He was. His dress or demeanor did not set Him apart from His peers. That is no longer the case. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father and He is Lord above all!
- Why is this title written on Jesus thigh? The thigh muscle is the biggest and strongest muscle in the body. Jesus' title is placed over His greatest strength, built up because He "walked out" the will of God. How strong is your thigh muscle? You don't get a big thigh muscle by praying for one; you get a strong muscle by walking and running to do the will of God.

17 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,

18 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."

- Once again, John heard heaven speak in a loud voice. Heaven is always "broadcasting." Are you listening for what heaven is trying to say? Do not harden your heart. Have faith to hear and you will hear.
- The angel is inviting spectators to see the fulfillment of the word of the Lord. The angel is confident that the Lord will "win" that he invites onlookers. The outcome is guaranteed.

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:10-11).

- God does not make idle promises or talk for the sake of hearing Himself speak. He does what He says He will do. So every reader of Revelation can be encouraged, even in the midst of dark times, that God will prevail.
- Also God is not a respecter of persons. If your name is written in His book, you will attend the marriage supper of the Lamb. If your name is not in the book, no matter who you are or what your status is, you will attend another supper, but this one will be for eternal damnation. But everyone has a choice, so God cannot be blamed for which supper a man attends.

19 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.

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth. The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. He will drink from a brook beside the way; therefore he will lift up his head (Psalm 110:1-7).

- The Lord promises to destroy His enemies, but that doesn't mean they won't try to win, so they wage war against Jesus and His army. They are doomed to failure, but they try anyway. They are a desperate foe. There is no way around the reality of God and His promises!

20 **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.**

21 **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.**

- There are several Old Testament references that refer to earthly kings, but which seem also to refer to Satan's judgment:

On the day the LORD gives you relief from suffering and turmoil and cruel bondage, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: How the oppressor has come to an end! How his fury has ended! The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, which in anger struck down peoples with unceasing blows, and in fury subdued nations with relentless aggression. All the lands are at rest and at peace; they break into singing (Isaiah 14:3-7).

All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you. How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?" (Isaiah 14:11-17)

- And then another reference in Ezekiel:

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God;

you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more" (Ezekiel 28:11-19).

- These are important passages that explain Satan's magnificence and his fall. Remember them. So is the fate of all who oppose our God.
- Our God is an awesome God! He knows how to punish the wicked but protect and reward the righteous! Praise the Lord!