



The Revelation of Jesus Christ

"Thigh Master"

19:11-16

Introduction

I hope it surprises you to learn that there are those who believe **Jesus has already returned.**

Of course we know that the Jehovah's Witness cult believes that Jesus 'returned' in 1914. They are taught that this was the year that Christ began his invisible second presence over the earth and is re-establishing God's Kingdom.

You might not know that there are Christians who believe Jesus has already returned. There is a resurgence in a doctrine called preterism. The term preterism comes from a Latin word and means "past" or "already gone by." The basic teaching of preterism is that the Great Tribulation has already occurred in the distant past, principally in 70AD. Those who hold to this teaching are known specifically as full preterists. To be fair and balanced, there is another subgroup of preterists known as partial or moderate preterists. They see parts of the Olivet Discourse, or Jesus' teaching on end times, as

partially fulfilled in 70AD but other parts as yet to be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ. Partial preterists talk about 'the big three' unfulfilled prophecies: the Second Coming, the resurrection from the dead, and the final judgment.

Here is a quote from the website of the International Preterist Association:

[The Bible points] to Christ's coming in some sense in connection with the Fall of Jerusalem at 70 AD. So, Jesus' predictions were fulfilled... It happened right on schedule. Many knew the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was important in God's scheme of redemption, but never understood its full significance. It has to do with the consummation of the plan of redemption. The final events of the redemptive drama came to pass in the first century within the apostles' generation (before 70 AD). Christ's kingdom is here now. Paradise has been restored in Christ (spiritually-speaking). Christ has conquered all His enemies and has given us the Kingdom.¹

We are premillennial, not preterist at all. The events of 70AD are not the fulfillment of the events foretold in the Revelation. Chapter six through eighteen describe the yet future events of the Great Tribulation. Our verses in Revelation nineteen describe the yet future physical return of Jesus Christ to earth in His Second Coming. It is the great climactic moment that everything in our world is moving towards today.

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

This book is the revealing, the unveiling, of Jesus. It's taken us eighteen chapters but here He is!

When last we saw the earth in this book all the armies of mankind had gathered together in and around the valley of Megiddo for the Battle of Armageddon. It is then that "heaven open[s]."

¹ <http://www.preterist.org/whatispreterism.asp>

God's timing is a thing of wonder. When all hope of the human race surviving is lost; when the armies of men are seeking to destroy one another; Heaven opens and the rightful ruler returns.

In our own lives God often accomplishes eleventh-hour 'returns' in order that our faith might be tested and made sure. Sometimes it seems that the deadline passes. Then we learn His grace is sufficient. He is God no matter the outcome and we praise Him.

Jesus comes riding a "white horse." There's a scene in *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* where Shadowfax appears for the first time. He is the magnificent lord of all horses. I crack-up at it; but something like that is going to happen as the Lord returns.

At His first coming the Lord rode a donkey into Jerusalem. It was the animal a king rode who was at peace. At His second coming He rides a magnificent animal of war.

We're told that Jesus is called "Faithful and True." These are almost like shout-outs as the Lord appears.

They also describe His nature and character:

- He is ever "faithful" to perform with zeal all that has been promised through Him. Lately I've been fascinated with, and therefore referencing, the Lord's statement in the psalms about the body prepared for Him at His first coming. How wonderful Jesus chose to be the Savior. How faithful to His task.
- He is always "true" to His own nature. You never need fear Him in the sense that He will act rashly or inappropriately towards you - even when you've failed or fallen. He is ever the lifter of your head in your discouragements.

If we are being changed from glory to glory into the image of the Lord then we too, are to be "faithful." As I am happy to remind you, faithfulness is what the Lord will judge us for. Not greatness; not talent. Faithfulness to Him and to the good works He determined for us to discover.

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We should be “true” - not to our own nature, but to His. We should have His mind and thus walk in His ways. And we should talk about Him in ways that properly portray Him.

It is in “righteousness [that] He judges and makes war.” It is “right” for Him to “judge” the nations and “make war” with them. By the end of the Great Tribulation these men and women have determined their fate by their individual personal decision to reject Jesus Christ.

This dramatic display of judgment comes *only at the end* of a long time of grace, patience, and mercy. This is no “rush to judgment.” Jesus has *amply* displayed His nature of mercy, forgiveness and grace to this fallen world.

Revelation 19:12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

John had looked into these eyes before, back in chapter one. We know the Lord is all-knowing. Looking into His eyes you feel His all-knowingness.

To be crowned with many crowns speaks of victory after victory. Think of all that Jesus has triumphed over: sin and death and the grave and the devil. He alone can be so crowned!

Apparently upon him there was writing, a “name.” We can’t help but be curious about the “name written that no one knew except Himself.” But, of course, *there’s no use speculating!*

I’m reminded, though, of what Jesus said in Matthew 11:27,

Matthew 11:27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Some of you have endearing names for your spouse or your kids. They may be common and people might even know what they are, but they can only be used by you and those you love.

Here, then, we see a bond of love between Father and Son so intimate that only they share in its secrets.

Revelation 19:13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

Not the blood He shed on the Cross at Calvary. If you were to look at this forensically you see that this is the blood spatter of His enemies.

The first direct reference to this rider is that He is “called the Word of God.” ***It’s Jesus!***

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word became 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.

Only Jesus can be called “the Word.” Only Jesus is God come in human flesh to declare and to reveal the character and nature of God to us.

Revelation 19:14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

You’ve heard the old joke, “I went to a fight and a hockey game broke out!” Well, at the Second Coming of Jesus we are coming back with Him “clothed” in the “fine linen” wedding garments to our marriage supper but a fight breaks out.

Not to worry. We won’t need to do any fighting.

Revelation 19:15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Paul writes that at His return Jesus Christ will destroy the antichrist with the breath of his mouth (Second Thessalonians 2:8). These, then, are metaphors for the spiritual power wielded by Jesus. His very words “strike the nations.”

His very words today strike our hearts with surgical precision:

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The “Word of God” in this context is the written Word, the Bible. It is “living.” The word means *life-giving*. For example: In the parables the Word of God is often equated with seed which contains life within itself, able to germinate and produce fruit. If you will believe it and obey it, God’s Word will bring forth life and fruit.

It is “powerful.” The word literally means *work[s] within*. We might use the word *transform*. If you will believe it and obey it, God’s life-giving Word will transform you from within.

It is “sharp.” It’s sharpness is described as a spiritual instrument, “sharper than any” physical “sword,” “piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow.” There are two levels of division. First, it divides “joints and marrow” from “soul and spirit.” Joints and marrow refer to physical properties, appetites, and drives. This is a promise to you that God’s life-giving, transforming Word can lance your physical appetites and drives! It is a promise of victory over your sinful flesh.

God’s Word can also “discern” the “soul” from the “spirit.” Your soul is your mind, will, and emotions. You were born a sinner and were soul and body with a dead spirit. When you are born-again, your spirit is made alive and you are spirit, soul, and body.

The Word is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The word “discern” means *critic* in the sense of making a realistic assessment or evaluation. God’s life-giving, transforming Word gives you a realistic assessment and evaluation of your mind, will, and emotions so that you can be governed by your spirit and not by your own soulish feelings and desires.

By the way, God’s Word is the **only** life-giving, transforming instrument that can discern between soul and spirit. Contemporary psychotherapies and so-called “Christian” psychology attempt to help you but, to the extent they mix human wisdom with God’s Word, they weaken the life-giving, transforming ability inherent in God’s Word.

You are to cease from your own efforts and energies and be empowered from within by God’s life-giving, transforming Word. To put it into practical terms: You discover from God’s Word how to think and live and then you believe God is able to empower you to apply it.

Back to the scene in Revelation nineteen. He’s coming to “rule them with a rod of iron.” In the Greek of Revelation the verb to rule is *poimainein*, which signifies “to shepherd.” The Lord rules the nations as a shepherd-king who with this rod both protects his own people and destroys his enemies.

The rod of the shepherd is an amazing tool. When the shepherd is afield with his flock in the high country he carries a minimum of equipment. In the Middle East the shepherd carries only a rod and staff. As far as I can tell, the rod has three uses:

1. First, it is used for protection. The shepherd spends hours practicing with this club learning how to throw it with amazing speed and accuracy. It becomes his main weapon of defense for both himself and his sheep.
2. Second, it is used to discipline the sheep. If the shepherd saw a sheep wandering away from its own, or approaching poisonous weeds, or getting too close to danger of one sort or another, the

club would go whistling through the air to send the wayward animal scurrying back to the bunch.

3. Third, the rod is used to examine and count the sheep. In the terminology of the Old Testament this was referred to as passing "under the rod:"

Ezekiel 20:37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant:

This meant not only coming under the owner's control and authority, but also to be subject to his most careful, intimate and firsthand examination. A sheep that passed "under the rod" was one which had been counted and looked over with great care to make sure all was well with it.

The "winepress" is a terrifying image of judgment. It seems to be borrowed from this passage in Isaiah:

Isaiah 63:2 Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

Isaiah 63:3 "I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes.

Like grapes being crushed in a vat, so will the armies of men be defeated by the Lord.

In the mean time the Scripture speaks of our feet this way:

Romans 10:15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

Today the Lord has multiplied millions of feet on the earth as believers share their testimony. In the end His feet will stomp those who fully and finally refuse to believe.

Revelation 19:16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Here are just three ways of many suggestions to understand this imagery:

1. Jewish scholars insist that the word translated “thigh” would in Hebrew be the word *banner*. Thus they see Jesus with a long, flowing banner upon which is written “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”
2. It could be that the reference to His “thigh” is a reference to the sword that would be strapped to the soldier’s thigh.
3. It might be that Jesus has a tattoo. *Seriously!*

What we know for sure is that He is properly designated. Like a police officer or a firefighter might have their respective titles in big, reflective letters on their clothing.

In that great day, when we return with Jesus, the only weapon of warfare will be His Word.

Our warfare today is spiritual. Let’s meet the enemy with the spiritual arsenal at our disposal.