

# THE GRACE OF WRATH

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Text

Revelation 19:11-21

Topic

Jesus came the first time riding a donkey  
but returns the second time riding a white horse

Title

***“Back In the Saddle Again”***

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## **Nothing Will Ever Top the *Independence Day* White House Explosion.**

One movie critic described it as, *“Six spectacular seconds of cutting-edge annihilation. The ice-blue laser stabbing through the top of the building like a straw through a plastic soft-drink lid, the portico flying apart in every direction, the inferno blooming out and swallowing the escape helicopter whole... It's the most iconic moment in action-movie history.”*

We win in the end. We probably wouldn't if it was real. Dr. Stephen Hawking pointed out the obvious. The aliens leading the invasion would be so advanced that they would obliterate mankind before we knew what hit us.

Nevertheless, two of our president's held out hope that we could prevail if humanity united together against the common enemy:

- In 2014, as a guest on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, former president Bill Clinton talked about the possible existence of aliens. “It may be the only way to unite this increasingly divided world of ours,” he said. And by “it,” he meant an alien invasion from outer space.

- Thirty years earlier, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1987, President Ronald Reagan said, "I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside of this world."

Clinton and Reagan were right. In the Valley of Megiddo, the world's combined military might will unite to face their common threat. The danger will come from the sky and descend to Earth.

Stephen Hawking was also correct. The invaders win. Easily.

The Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, Prince of the kings of the Earth, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the beginning and the end, the Lord God omnipotent, will come in the clouds to claim Earth.

**It isn't an invasion, however. It is a triumphant return, a liberation.**

One more thing that ought to thrill you. *We are coming with Him as liberators.*

I'll organize my comments around two points: #1 You Will Be Astonished At His Appearance When You Return With Jesus, and #2 You Will Be Awestruck At His Power When You Return With Jesus.

### **#1 - You Will Be Astonished At His Appearance When You Return With Jesus (v11-14)**

Jesus promised that His coming for us would precede the seven-year Great Tribulation.

That day *cannot* overtake us as a thief. He will "keep [us] **from** the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the Earth" (Revelation 3:10).

- The first three chapters of the Revelation described the current Church Age.
- Chapters four and five brought us to Heaven to witness Jesus opening the seven-sealed scroll.

- Chapters six through eighteen chronicled the seven-year Great Tribulation. There is no mention of the church on Earth in those chapters.

### **In chapter nineteen, Heaven opens and we accompany the Return of the King.**

Rev 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.

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 at the Lord's return.

Jesus is "**called** Faithful and True." These words describe His character, but here they seem to be shout-outs as the Lord appears.

At His first coming, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem. The crowds took up a shout, "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!" Shouting "Faithful and True" reminds us that Jesus completed His mission by offering Himself the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.

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 decisions to reject God's free offer of salvation.

This dramatic display of judgment comes *only at the end* of a long time of grace, patience, and mercy. There is no rush to judgment.

Rev 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.

"Flame of fire" are His eyes fixed upon the wicked for judgment. I don't want to diminish Jesus in any way but think of the various superheroes who have a gaze that can kill.

To be “crowned with many crowns” indicates victory after victory. Think of all that Jesus has triumphed over: Sin, death, the grave, and the devil.

We can't help but be curious about the “name written that no one knew except Himself.” It isn't very smart to suggest names when the text plainly says we can't know it.

It is weird to think that the omniscient Father and Holy Spirit don't know this name. I conclude that It is an endearing name between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Albert Barnes said,

*This cannot mean that no one could read the name... It involved a depth of meaning, a degree of sacredness, and a relation to the Father, which He alone could apprehend.*

Commentators generally agree Jesus has more than two hundred names. One site I discovered has an alphabetical list of **900 names**, complete with the Scripture references ([christiananswers.net](http://christiananswers.net))

It's a great exercise to discover His names. Each of them describes some aspect of His nature or character or mission or methods.

### **Thousands of names could never fully describe our Lord.**

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

The blood isn't His. Look at this forensically, and it is the blood spatter of His enemies. The writing employs a prophetic tense to show that something is so sure to happen you can portray it as having happened. Jesus is about to destroy them.

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." Jesus is God come in human flesh to show us God.

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

Don't be thrown off by the word "armies." It is describing us in our return with the Lord at His coming. In the opening verses of chapter nineteen we were the bride accompanying the Bridegroom. "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." The metaphor changes to that of a Commander-in-Chief returning with His armies. We are His bride; we are His armies.

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

The first rule of this fight club is that we don't 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.

It makes for interesting art, but there is no sword coming out of the mouth of Jesus. Tazerface said to Rocket Raccoon, "It's metaphorical." The spiritual power of His words "strike[s] the nations."

The verb to rule is "to shepherd." The Lord rules the nations as a Shepherd-King who protects His people and destroys His enemies with His rod.

The rod of the shepherd has three uses:

1. First, it is used for protection. The shepherd spends hours practicing with this club, learning how to throw it with incredible speed and accuracy. It is a 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, 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 says, "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant."

The "winepress" is a terrifying image of judgment. Isaiah described it:

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. The apostle John introduced these hostile forces earlier in the Revelation. The location of this confrontation is the Valley of Megiddo, and we call it Armageddon.

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

As He sits on His white horse, the part of the cloak covering the "thigh" is the most conspicuous and is visible to all. The title is written upon the cloak.

Jesus was not all that recognizable in His first coming. He didn't glow in the dark or have a halo. He was an average Jew. There will be no doubt at His Second Coming He is the Lord God - but not because He has a name tag.

The title on His cloak announces that never ever will there be any other king or lord over mankind.

**N**o one has seen Jesus as He will appear at His Second Coming.

**We will see Him first, or at least before those who dwell on Earth.**

“Astonished” is one of many words to describe our reaction to Jesus at His return. We will be filled with overwhelming surprise and wonder; amazed. I offer something to consider. The apostle Paul wrote, “When He comes, in that Day, **to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe**, because our testimony among you was believed” (Second Thessalonians 1:10).

Albert Barnes wrote,

*The redeemed in that day will be the means of promoting His glory; the universe will see His glory manifested in their redemption. His chief glory as seen in that day will be connected with the fact that He has redeemed His people. He will be “glorified” by the numbers that shall have been redeemed; by their patience in the trials through which they have passed; by the triumphs which religion shall have made on the earth; by their praises and songs.*

William McDonald adds, “[When we return with Jesus] amazed onlookers will gasp as they see what He has been able to do with such unpromising human beings.”

It’s all about Jesus, not us. Nevertheless, His glorified bride will elicit a gasp from all creatures when they see us completed in Him.

**Astonishing.**

**#2 - You Will Be Awestruck At His Power When You Return With Jesus (v17-21)**

One of the greatest knockouts in UFC history also happens to be the fastest. Jorge Masvidal KO'd Ben Askren in five seconds.

There are too many "I want my money back" fights in the UFC, the MMA, and pro boxing.

### **The Battle of Armageddon might take longer to say than it lasts.**

Revelation 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

An angel blocks out the sun on account of his brilliance. He commands scavenger birds to gather in the Valley of Megiddo. It communicates to the hostiles that their defeat is a foregone conclusion.

Revelation 19:18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

There is no description of actual fighting. Jesus instantaneously overcomes the united military power of Earth. We will see Him do the same to the supernatural powers of Earth.

All those gathered against Jesus decided to take the Mark of the Beast. They were warned that there would be no opportunity or ability to repent. They will suffer the earthly and eternal consequences.

Revelation 19:19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

The "Beast" is the superman we commonly call the antichrist. Previously, we learned that God would draw he and his armies, and all the armies on Earth, to this battle to be destroyed.



In any good action movie, there is a showdown between the hero and the villain. They go at it hard. For dramatic effect, the villain nearly defeats the hero, but with some fantastic maneuver, the bruised and bloodied hero prevails. Nothing like that will happen at Armageddon.

Revelation 19:20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

The Beast and his previously introduced sidekick False Prophet will be the first two inhabitants of the Lake of Fire.

The Lake of Fire is the final eternal destination for all those who ultimately reject Jesus Christ. We usually refer to it as Hell, but that is inaccurate. Let's look at a few terms to describe the afterlife destinations of the dead.

Before Jesus Christ's resurrection, the souls of the dead, saved and unsaved, went to Hades. ("Sheol" is Hebrew for Hades). It is translated *grave* thirty-one times, *Hell* another thirty-one times, and *pit* three times in King James Version (KJV) of the Bible.

Hades has two compartments separated by an impassable gulf:

1. One side was and remains the holding cell for the unsaved after they die.
2. The other side, called "Abraham's Bosom" in Luke 16:22, was for the comfort of the saved after they died while awaiting their entrance into Heaven.

I said *was* about believers because the resurrection of Jesus changed everything. When Jesus died, He descended into Hades. When He was resurrected, He led the saved out of Hades to Heaven. Since then, the souls and spirits of the saved go directly to Heaven when they die. Abraham's Bosom is vacant. A believer is absent from their body and immediately present with the Lord.

The unsaved still go to Hades. All nonbelievers from creation forward wait there for their final judgment.

Then there is "Gehenna." It is translated as "Hell" all twelve times in the KJV. It is used to refer to the *permanent* place for the torment of the "... *soul and body ...*" (Matthew 10:28). It is a place of "... *fire that never shall be quenched*" (Mark 9:45).

Gehenna **is** the Lake of Fire described in Revelation nineteen and twenty. It is presently uninhabited. The Beast and his False Prophet will be the first to be cast into it at the end of the Great Tribulation.

No mere human being, in a regular body, can exist in the Lake of Fire. Those confined there for eternity are first raised in a supernatural body that is not consumed by the fire.

Since the Beast and the False Prophet are confined there at the Second Coming, we conclude they already have supernatural bodies:

- Around mid-Trib, the Beast will be assassinated and come back to life. He probably will do so in a more-than-human body.
- We are not told anything about how the False Prophet might receive a superhuman body.

Jesus said in Matthew 25:41 that God made the Lake of Fire for the devil and the fallen angels. We honestly say that God never sends any man to the Lake of Fire. They go there of their own free will, having rejected Christ.

Revelation 19:21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

The "rest" are those on this battlefield. It is a quick knockout. The sick experience of them having their flesh torn off and devoured is an illustration of the rottenness of our unredeemed flesh.

**S**hock & Awe is a military term to describe achieving rapid dominance on the battlefield.

The Lord is the master of Shock & Awe. Not just in the end, at Armageddon, but throughout the Bible, on many fields of battle. Joshua, David, Gideon, and many others were involved in Shock & Awe.

King David was awestruck. In Psalm 65, he praises the Lord's military victories then says of Him, "O God, *You are* more **awesome** than Your holy places. The God of Israel *is* He who gives strength and power to *His* people. Blessed *be* God!" (v35).

For all that, the most awe-striking thing of all is God's salvation. In my most spiritual moments, I am awestruck that He saved a wretch like me; and wretches like you.

Psalms 66:5 invites us to "Come and see the works of God; **He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.**"

You & I are "the works of God." We are works in progress, true. Since God saved you, there is enough about you that a person can "Come and see" Jesus.