

# Apokalypsis: I'll Be Back ~ Pastor Paul

## February 19, 2017

When Payge and I first started dating, we actually started as a long distance couple. I had known her before as friends, but we started dating long distance. Payge lived in Moose Jaw and I was in Ontario for the summer. So during those first few months, we were completely apart. We were able to communicate through texting, phoning and such, but we certainly longed for that physical interaction, to be able to hug for the first time, to be able to hold hands. When she finally came and visited, I picked her up at the greyhound station, and finally I was able to physically touch her. But before that, I spent many hours longing to see her with my own eyes, to be physically present with her.

When we love someone, it is difficult to be away from them. Anyone who has ever been in a long distance relationship knows this. The same goes for the church and Jesus. We await his return. And the Bible uses this analogy – a bride waiting for her groom – as the church waiting for the return of Christ. This morning we are going to look at what revelation has to say about when Christ finally returns.

If the book of revelation were a movie, I believe the return of Christ is definitely the climax of the story. It is a glorious and amazing event. I remember a dialogue from an old Christian film, the road to redemption. In it, the grandpa mentions the return of Christ. The granddaughter asks him; why would he want to come back? If he came here once and was crucified, why would he ever want to come back here?" The grandpa replied "When he returns things will be a bit different. He's coming back to be the world's judge"

Remember back in the gospels, when everyone thought Jesus would return as a triumphant King? These people thought the messiah would free them from oppression and come as a triumphant king. And Jesus is a king, but his Kingdom is not of this world. And when he returns, he will return to judge the devil and he will reign on this earth.

There are many passages throughout the Bible on Jesus' return. One of the key passages is the one that Gord read this morning. Let's look at that the text is saying.

I believe we can split this passage up into 3 sections;

- Description of Christ's return 11-13, 16
- Description of Holy Army 14
- Judgement from Christ 15

The Final Judgement will be dealt with in Adam's next sermon. The surrounding passages deal a lot with the holy army and judgement. For the purposes of this sermon we are going to focus on the verses that speak to Christ's return. Let's look at this passage:

And I saw heaven open – This is likely a marker to show this begins a new vision for John

And there before me was a white horse, The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True,  
and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

- Now that's an interesting word. Judge. Not really something that we hear with a lot of positive connotation these days. "Who are you to judge me?" "Don't judge me!". And there is good reason for this – as imperfect humans we are not worthy to judge other imperfect humans. Matthew 7 1,2 says "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. **2** For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged." The thing about Jesus' return is that he is worthy to judge us! He is the holy God almighty This judgement is done by someone who is indeed worthy. This is important to mention. The wars done on earth are done by man, who is fallen, but the Lord wages war and judges in his righteousness.

**12** His eyes are like a flame of fire,  
and on his head are many diadems (crowns)

- Symbolism here for penetrating eyes, eyes that see through all. The crown symbolism seems to show his rulership, that he is king of kings, and the crowns symbolize his kingship

and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

- There are a few lines of thinking on what this means here. Some scholars believe this is a reference to the fact that the true pronunciation of the tetragrammaton, or name given to God, YHWH, has been lost to time, and no one but God knows this. I personally disagree with this interpretation for a few reasons, one of the main ones being that it isn't true no one knows that name! We know Moses and many other ancient Jews do know that name. Along with many scholars I think this refers to the fact that no one can really fathom all that his name represents. Names in the Bible are given much importance, and no one knowing his name seems to me to refer to that Jesus is truly indescribable and incomprehensible.

**13** He is clothed in a robe dipped in[a] blood,

and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

- The blood symbolism is clear here, this is the blood of the new covenant of Jesus. The name they give to Jesus here is the Word of God. I'm reminded of how John introduced

his gospel. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Greek word here is Logos, and I've been listening to this podcast about the importance of John declaring Jesus to be the Logos. I could go on about this for a while, but the point is that God is the eternal Logos, the Word of God.

Skipping ahead to verse 16...

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

- There is a lot of debate amongst commentaries about what his name being written on his robe and his thigh could mean. One interesting perspective I think is that his name being written on his robe dignified a military leader, and his name written on his thigh showed his humanity. Some people believe that this refers to his name covering his robe and thigh, and some believe it is two separate inscriptions. It seems to me that either way does not change the meaning of the text especially, but what is important is the name that is written – King of kings and Lord of lords.
- This isn't an unfamiliar title for us in the modern church, we have heard this many times, and it also isn't the first time this title is used in scripture. But this is a reminder of who Jesus Christ is. He is the Alpha, the Omega, he rules over all. No matter how powerful world leaders may feel, he rules over all. He rules over Justin Trudeau. He rules over Donald Trump. He rules over Hollywood. It's easy to forget his Lordship in this world that has forgotten Him. But when he returns, all of creation will see Him as He is, the King of kings, the Lord of lords.

Now, the topic of Jesus' second coming could cover several years' worth of sermon series!

There are 318 mentions of Jesus' return in the New Testament. We have spent the last while on 5 verses about Jesus' second coming. This would be a very, very long sermon if we explored all of these verses, but I'm going to mention some facts that we can see from this passage and other passages that speak about Christ's return,

**Christ's return is...**

- Real – not illusory, but the same body that walked the earth will return
  - Acts 1:11 – **“Men of Galilee” they said. “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven but someday he will return in the same way!**

- Jesus doesn't return in a spiritual form apart from a body, but the same body that walked the earth will once again come to earth
- Jesus' return will be an actual event
- Revelation 1:7 – **Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him – even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen”**
  - A quick note here. The Greek word ὄψεται (horao) that is translated will see can be translated in a way as to mean not in physically seeing with the eyeballs, but for all to see the glory of God and understand. This could also mean that all will see Jesus Christ as well, I believe it is open to interpretation.
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- Sudden– it is clear that it will be unexpected
  - We should be extremely skeptical about folks who will claim to have the time, date of the return of Christ.
  - There are some folks that interpret the fact that Christ's return will be sudden to the idea that it will be a secret return, and in fact that there will be a second return of Christ as well as a third. This is a topic which there is certainly freedom to take various perspectives on. The opinion of myself and Pastor Adam is that there is only one second coming of Christ, and it seems to us that the church will endure times of tribulation.
  - Now, you may be thinking – aren't I doing here what I just said not to? Trying to guess the time of Jesus' return. Here is the difference – I think it is appropriate for Christians to postulate the *relative* time of Christ's return, but not the *actual* time. It would be appropriate for us to look at the text and from the text alone look at what the prophecies are saying, but then to take those prophecies and claim a specific date is inappropriate, and as we have seen many times, these claims are all wrong. Furthermore, the very moment these individuals start advertising the date, if they are correct they are proving scripture incorrect!
  - Matthew 24 is an excellent passage on Christ's return, and I would recommend looking it up this week as further reading .Matthew 24:34 says “**But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,[f] but only the Father.** And skipping ahead to verse 44 says **So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.** In fact, verses 36-51 are dedicated to Jesus saying that the day and hour are unknown!
- Glorious
  - Look at 2 Thess 1:7-10
    - **2Th. 1:7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be**

**glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.**

- He comes back as a holy King. When he came to earth the first time, he came as a humble baby, but when he returns, all the earth will see Jesus for who he truly is.
- There is no fear for those in Christ. One of my favourite verses is **Rom. 5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** Ravi Zacharias says that God did not come to make bad people good, but to make dead people live. The judgement here is the rejection of Christ's free gift, and Adam is going to speak onto that more next week. So, even though there is no fear for those in Christ, there is much fear for those who reject Christ. The free gift of salvation is open to all, and I encourage you that if you don't know where you stand before God, to either come up after the service and pray with the elders or talk to someone about this.
- Purposeful - He comes for a reason.
  - To receive those who have accepted Christ
    - **1Th. 4:16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**
  - To judge the world
    - This judgement will be very different for those who receive Christ and those who do not.
    - Let's look at a few verses about this:
      - **Matthew 16: 27 For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.**
      - **1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**
      - **Matthew 25:32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.**
    - Pastor Adam is going to speak on the final judgement next week, but we can know that a key purpose in his return is his judgement.
  - To reign forever
    - We began this series talking about the throne room. And when he returns, he will reign not only in heaven but also on earth, forevermore. He will make all things new once again.
    - **Rev. 21:5-7 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the**

**Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment**

- He will reign forevermore and will make all things right again. Then we who know Jesus will be with him for all eternity.

So what would be the biggest takeaway from this? I think it is a reminder for all of us that we must remember to go and share the good news of Christ. Let's remember the great commission **-Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matt 28:19-20)**

This is our calling on earth, to go and make disciples, so that we can bring many people into the eternal throne room of God. We long for the presence of God. We are currently in a long distance relationship with Jesus. We long to be in his glorious presence, to worship him at his throne room. But we await his return to earth. While we are on earth, we are strangers in a foreign land, and we are called to go out and make disciples until he returns and takes us home.