



Sermon – January 5, 2020
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Verses Covered This Week

Revelation 19:11 - 21

Happy new year! Couple people. Did a wedding yesterday up in Dallas for a former student of mine and very consciously made sure that when I signed the marriage license I did put 2020 so I'm 1 for 1 on the year. Got a couple students here. Praise the Lord! I know at the beginning of the year, new year, a beginning, there's a lot of focus on beginnings. Some of you are resolutions people. Some of you are not resolutions people. But where I want to take us in Scripture today, where I believe God has for us to open up and look today has to do with, not the beginning but the end. And the ending should have and does have a profound impact on the actual story. For example, last year, and you don't have to be a fan of these movies. But last year, if you're a Marvel fan you'll know, if not, it's OK. But last year the final Avengers movie came out. It was the final movie of 22 movies long of story. And it's two brothers who helped write and direct it. And they asked them about the pressure of how do you take a story that's 22 stories long and find a way to end it. How did you make decisions? How did you know what was going to happen? And they said, "We really didn't. When we were given the assignment back in 2015, we sat down." And they said, "We only knew two things. We knew very thoroughly the main characters. We knew Iron Man and Captain America. We knew the characters. And we knew how the story would end. But we didn't know anything else. But because we knew the characters and we knew how the story would end, those two realities dictate every choice we made in writing the rest of the story. Whether to cut this scene, to keep this scene, to have this character do this, to go here." Every decision was completely and totally constrained by the knowledge of the characters and by the ending.

So I know we're at the beginning of a new year. The beginning of a new decade. Y2K was 20 years ago. But do we know we are in a story? And you and I are not the main character of this story. The Scripture tells us who the main character is. Scripture tells us how the chapter will end. So if you've got your Bibles, go with me to Revelation 19. Revelation 19. And as you're turning there or scrolling there if you're using your phone. Let me just kind of set up the backdrop for where John's going to, we're going to drop into the story, what John's going to show us. Matthew 24 tells us that at the return of Christ, the whole world will see it. The whole world will see Jesus coming down. And 1 Thessalonians 4 tells us that when Jesus comes down, it won't just be something that everybody could see, but there will be a shout of the archangel, a

trumpet blast. It will be something loud. Everyone will see it. And it's in this moment, Revelation 19, verse 11. This is what Scripture says.

¹¹And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. ¹²His eyes a flame of fire, and on His head are many, enumerable, unable to be counted, diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. ¹³He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. ¹⁵And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, He will rule or destroy them with a rod of iron; He will tread, He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

John says, "I saw heaven opened." Perfect verb meaning that once heaven opens here, it's not going to go back closed. It remains opened. Saw heaven open and I see the opening, I see a white horse. A white horse and One riding it Faithful and True. Obviously we know the One riding it is Jesus. But what's significant about the white horse? Because a white horse, a horse is what a king rides into battle. Jesus stepping down out of heaven here is not stepping down as the infant in humility coming through the womb. No, now He steps down as the king that He is on His horse, ready for battle. Ready for battle with those who stand against Him. He steps down on a white horse. A white horse radiant in beauty reflecting His holiness, his righteousness, and also symbolically providing an illustration that the One who rides the white horse comes to vindicate those who have trusted and followed Him in the face of a world that has mocked them and said they are wrong. He rides and is called Faithful and True. Jesus is the Faithful and True one. What do we mean by faithful? It means He is trustworthy. He is who He is and He will always do what He does. All of Scripture gives us clear picture of who Jesus is and as you and I enter in and walk into a new year, we need to understand, He is the faithful one. There will never be a moment regardless of what high or what low you or I walk through this year where Jesus is not exactly who He says He is and He is not doing exactly what He promises to do. It doesn't matter if you and I see it. Sometimes we can't see it. Sometimes we are shrouded in darkness. But praise the Lord that darkness is not night to Him; it is as light to Him. And there is nowhere we can flee from His presence, Psalm 139. There is no time that He will not be who He is doing what He has promised to do in your life and my life, conforming us to the image of Christ. He is the true one. Which obviously means He does not speak lies. But it's further than that. When it says that Jesus is the true one, He's the actual one. He is not a mistake. He's the real one. He's the genuine person. He is the true God. He is faithful. He is true. What else does it say about Jesus? It says, in righteousness He judges and wages war. And righteousness and perfect, flawless, justice, holiness, rightness He judges. He weighs sin. We see, if you were to turn over just one chapter, we see the great, the great throne judgment where God will take all those who have rejected His offer of salvation and He will righteously; judge them on their deeds of sin. And it's significant that in righteousness He judges. Because if He judges in righteousness then it means that not one of us as a human can look at Him and say, "Jesus, Your judgment is too harsh or wrong or unjust." It's not. Because all of His judgments are righteous. And He wages war. You and I live; we've had an interesting start to 2020. There's a lot going on in the world. A lot dangerous going on in the world. There's a lot of rumors of wars and threats of wars. You and I live without very much control there. We live in

a world where at times it very much seems that evil reigns and good loses. But Jesus is the warrior king who is faithful and true. Who in righteousness not only judges but stands against evil. He wages war. It says, His eyes are a flame of fire. A reference to the fact that there is nothing that Jesus does not see and He does not see with perfect, holy clarity. Hebrews 4, the word of God is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword, able to pierce the division between soul and spirit, bone and marrow. Before the eyes of whom none can hide. Now maybe on one hand if I'm living in sin, that's a slightly terrifying reality. Because it means that there is no aspect of my life where I can hide, sin where the Lord cannot see, where Jesus does not see with perfect holy clarity. But it's not a terrifying reality because now if Jesus does see sin in my life with perfect holy clarity, if I am His child, He is convicting me, wooing me, calling me back to walk in rightness with Him. If I am not His child and He is sitting there convicting me, calling me, pulling me, wooing me to come to salvation or repentance in faith. But it's not just sin that He sees. It's all things that He sees. The reality is we don't know what this year holds. Some of you will have the greatest year of your life. Some of you unfortunately, or me, may face the hardest year of our lives. And there's not one ounce of injustice, one ounce of sorrow, one ounce of trial that Jesus does not see with perfect, complete, holy clarity. Because His eyes are aflame of fire. On His head are many diadems. This is a really neat aspect of this study. Because the word there for many means, it's a number that can't be counted. And diadems are crowns that are reflective of the character of the King and the sovereignty of the King's rule. And it's interesting in the book of Revelation because you have the beast and the false prophet and they have diadems. One has seven diadems; one has ten diadems reflecting that there is some aspect of power that they have, of wicked power that they have. But as Jesus steps out of heaven to come, what we see about Jesus is Jesus does not have a finite number of diadems. He has an infinite number of diadems reflecting the fact that the character and sovereignty of His rule is absolute. And we'll come back to that in a second. So hold that thought.

It says He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. And there are all sorts of thoughts about what this is trying to say. So let me just, let me summarize after a lot of study where I think they fall. While Jesus is able to be known truly, you and I can know God truly, we can know Him intimately, we can know Him deeply. We will still always be His creation and He our Creator. And so while we can know God truly, we will never come to a point in all eternity where we know Him fully. And so the fact that Jesus has a name written that none knows but Himself is reflective of the fact that you and I will never for all eternity ever come to an ending point of going, "Wow! I finally know all of Jesus. I have made it to level one million as a Christian." We will always be growing into greater and deeper intimacy with Christ for all eternity. And with that comes a second aspect. There is an idea in ancient times that if someone knew the true name of someone, then they had the ability to have power over them; to manipulate, to control. The fact that Jesus has a name written on Him that none knows but Himself is a clear statement there is no one who can control Him. There is no one who can manipulate Him. You and I cannot bargain with Him because He is the supreme, sovereign, ruler, creator of the universe. He has a name written that no one knows but Himself.

He has a robe dipped in blood and interesting statement because at first thought, you read through this, "Robe dipped in blood. This is reflective that He shed His blood for you and I." But that's not the illusion from Scripture. It's actually a reference to Isaiah chapter 63 where it talks about God's servant, Jesus, prophetically. And Jesus, Jesus slaying the enemies of God and in that chapter, the servant, his robe, is covered in the blood. Not that He has shed for

redemption, but the blood of the enemies that have been destroyed. So it's a reference of the blood of the enemies that have been destroyed. But Jesus hasn't fought the enemies yet. So how does His robe have blood? Because His victory is so absolutely sure, He already wears the spoils of its victory. His robe's already covered in the blood from His victory because He has already won. And there is no shot that this moment does not happen. There will be no alteration to the story because our God is absolutely sovereign in who He is. It says His name is the Word of God. In the beginning was the word. The word was with God; face to face. The word was God. The word became flesh and lived among us. The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword. Isaiah 55. God says, "I send out my word and it will not come back to me void. But it will accomplish all that I have commanded it. He is the word of God. Jesus is the one who carries out the will of the Father and none can stop Him. And it says, verse 14, and the armies which are in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.

Now there is, there is warrant, if we were to take time and study through Revelation, very likely who is the armies here? It's you and I. It's you and I riding on horseback. It's you and I coming out of heaven with Christ into this battle. It's you and I clothed in white linen. And notice, our robes have no blood. We're clothed white. Because if you and I are in Christ, we have been washed white as snow. We have been made pure. We have been given His righteousness. We have been granted His holiness. But we don't wear the blood. Why? Because we do no conquering. We're just there to ride in the battle with Him. Jesus is the only One who does the conquering and we get to reap the benefits of who He is. It says, from His mouth comes a sharp sword so that with it He may strike down the nations. He will rule them with the rod of iron. Very simply put, you and I live in a day where, and we've seen this, this is not just our day, this has been the history of the world. Nations do what nations do. Nations try to control other nations. And those nations fight back against the nations that try to control them and it's a perpetual cycle. The nations rage. But when Jesus, the One who rules and is sovereign, steps on the scene, the nations will no longer rage. There will be none who defy Him. There will be, because from the word of His mouth, it actually says in 2 Thessalonians, talking about the anti-Christ. It actually says that with Jesus' breath, He will slay the anti-Christ. There's not an epic battle. There's no Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. There's no, there's no King Arthur. There's no Hollywood ending. With His breath He will slay. It will be over in a moment. With the word that comes from His mouth, the nations will be captivated and it says that He treads the winepress of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. He is the one who deals with sin rightly. Who takes sin seriously. As a reminder, it's an intense text. Part of my prayer is that this would not come out as a fire and brimstone statement. But it is true. Jesus is the one who will dispense the wrath of God upon all who stand in their sin and in their own wickedness. We see this in the next chapter. None whose name were found written in the book of life, all whose names were not in the book of life, they were cast into the Lake of Fire. Here's the other side. Jesus is the one who treads the winepress of God's wrath. He's also the one who drank all the wine of God's wrath on your behalf and my behalf. He's not treading anything He hasn't already Himself born. And He is righteous in what He says. And so all these things, He is the warrior king. He is the one who is faithful and true. He is the righteous judge and warrior. He is the one who sees all. He is the one whose sovereignty is untouched. He is the one who is beyond us and uncontrolled by us. He is the supreme victor. He is the word of God. He is the leader of the armies of heaven. He is the ruler of the nations. Which is why it says He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The King of Kings and Ruler of Lords. He is the supreme ruler. He is the One. The title

there is One, there is no one above. Which is why, look at the rest of what it's going to say. Drop down in verse 20, verse 19. It says,

¹⁹I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

So here it is. All the forces of evil have come together to stand against Christ. And watch how anti-climactic.

²⁰And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the 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 thrown alive into the lake.

These two, these powerful, wicked, satanic, demonic beings. They were thrown to a place they didn't want to go because they were slain. They were thrown alive and powerless to stop it. Because even the forces of darkness are powerless against the sovereign power of our God.

²¹And the rest were killed with the sword which came from His mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and the birds were filled with their flesh.

Because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, there is a decisive end to wickedness. Because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, we see in the rest of Revelation 20 that He is the one who will deal and place judgment upon sin. Because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. According to 1 Thessalonians He will descend. The dead in Christ will rise. And we will all meet Him in the air according to Philippians 3. Because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In a moment, in a breath, He will transform your flesh and my flesh into His resurrected flesh. We will be given a new body. And because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, it is absolutely certain that Revelation 21 is true. That I see a new heaven and a new earth and a whole new holy city, new Jerusalem coming down. And I hear a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God, is among men." And He will dwell among them and they shall be His people and God Himself will be among them and He will wipe every tear from their eyes and there will no longer be any death. There will no longer be any mourning or crying or pain. The first things have passed away because He is King of Kings and He is Lord of Lords. This is how the chapter of this story ends. This is who our Jesus is. He is the Warrior King. He is the Sovereign One. He is the One who sees all things. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And this is the ending that He brings to this chapter.

So very simple question for you and I this morning as we start a new year. You and I in Christ are without excuse. We know who the main character is. It's not you or me. It's Jesus Christ; King of Kings, Lord of Lords. And we know how He ends this chapter of the story. So the question is, how does knowing who He is and how this chapter ends, does it dictate every ounce of how you and I live the story? Are you and I constrained by who He is; by what He is coming back to do? Are we constrained by it? And our pursuit of Christ and trust in Christ, are we driven by who He is and what He does? I had a student this summer. We talked about this passage in Bible study one night. Student, Caleb Elliot, we'd meet time to time, one of our team leaders, a student you should be very proud of as a church. He told me, he said, "I have thought more about this passage. The more I think about this passage, it alters forever. This is the

picture of Jesus in my mind when I stand up to sing a song of praise. It alters that worship. It is this who Jesus is, it alters everything. The soul reason for you and I's existence; to know love and follow Christ. Our reason for existence is not to have community. It's not to have the family of our dreams, the spouse, the kids. It's not to have worldly honors whether that for you is work, whether students that for you is school or athletics honors. It's not about what vacations you take your family on, what kind of retirement package you will have. It's not about the accomplishments, parents, it is about knowing and loving and following Jesus Christ. It is about pursuing a personal relationship with Him. Not playing church. Not doing ministry. It is pursuing and knowing Him. And out of knowing Him, He ministers through us. How does this impact the way we pursue Him? How does knowing who Jesus is here in this passage, how does it impact? Whether this year is the year of your dreams or this year is the year of your nightmares. When the highs and the lows, when injustice occurs to you at work or in school, when sorrow comes, how will this change the way in which you trust Him? Because no matter how much the world may or may not feel like it's running out of control, He is in control. You and I, when we face the best and when we face the worst, can rest in Him who loves us. Him who endured the cross and drank the wine press of the wrath of God. Him who did not spare His own Son. Him who is the One who is faithful and true. And because you and I know the end, we can rejoice no matter what the circumstances are. We can grieve honestly before the Lord when things are hard. And we can grieve in hope because He is coming back and He will vindicate those of us who follow Him.

How does impact, not just our pursuit in trusting Christ, how does it impact the valuing of our values? If you are a resolutions person, how many of your resolutions, are your resolutions tied to anything in Scripture? In fact, I saw a friend from college post that instead of doing resolutions this year, the question she was asking was not, "What are my resolutions?" But, "God, where have you called me to be faithful this year?" How's it impact, do we value the things that God values? I'll just give you a list of things that I wrote down as I prayed through what this means. How does it impact the way that we value Jesus' opinion of holiness and sin? Because as you see Jesus, He judges righteously, He wages war righteously, He deals with sin. Jesus does not take sin lightly. He bore the wrath of God for sin, your sin, my sin. There is no place for you or I as a following of Christ to have a cavalier attitude towards sin. Yet how many times do I walk through and hear, "Oh, my G. O. D." Taking God's name in vain casually 24/7 among Christians. How many times do we justify watching shows? Well it's artistic. Well it's what the co-workers in the offices are watching. Shows that Christ would never be found watching. How often do we engage in humor, in jokes, that would grieve the heart of God? How often are we content with living 24/7 in our worry and our fear seeking to control our own lives? Ignoring the fact that God calls worry sin. There is no place for a cavalier attitude to sin, but it's not just simply here are the rules, so don't sin. Here's really what it is. Do we value Him and His holiness? Do we sit back and say, "Lord, You are God. You have loved me. You are worthy. So I want whatever delights Your heart." And if it doesn't, get rid of it. That's the real question. It's not what can I not do. It's what does it mean to pursue and to honor the holiness of God? It's our attitude toward holiness and sin. Does it value what He values? Do we value what He values in terms of the church? This picture of Christ is not simply a picture of Christ coming out of heaven to just deal with the wicked. It's a picture of Christ, more often than not in the rest of Scripture, of Christ coming back for His people. For those whom He loves; His bride. Do you and I this year, in light of the end, in light of who He is, do we value the church? Hebrews 10 tells us to not forsake the gathering of ourselves. We read it and it sounds like a

suggestion. Hey, church family, don't neglect coming together. It's not. It's actually a most imperative. It's a passionate, urgent, command that says from God, "Do not under any circumstances neglect the coming together of ourselves as is the habit of some." Poor church attendance was there in the first century just as it is today. God, I know, is not pleased with the American church and the fact that in our churches in the states, in our healthy Bible believing gospel-preaching churches, statistics say that the faithful church member today attends less than two Sundays a month. God is not pleased in that. It is a command. Do not neglect. When we neglect, we show we clearly do not value His body as He values His body. Let me say this. God is not pleased when we have people who attend who is in your Life Groups you haven't seen in three weeks. Now I realize we've had the holidays, you haven't seen anybody in three weeks. But under normal circumstances, who's in your Life Group you haven't seen in a week, two weeks? And their names, their faces are popping in your mind and we sit back and we never reach out and say, "Hey, where are you? What's going on?" God is not pleased in this. We show that we do not value the body because we fill ourselves with the next thing which is and the rest of our time commitments. Are we taking our time and are we saying, "God in light of who You are, in light of the ending is every ounce of my time really being used in the way that would please You?" I joked when I shared this with our students. I said, "Guys, Jesus did not save you so you could run around finding your perfect little community and winning Fortnite. Jesus didn't save you and I so we could slave over our cell phones. Jesus did not save you and I so we could live the American dream. He saved you and I for sovereign purposes. He has wired you, knit you, put you in places for such a time as this." Parents, He's done the same with your children. Parents, in how you raise your children, do you say, "We honor Jesus." But you spend far more time focusing on their grades, their accomplishments, their activities, so they'll get a good scholarship to go to college, to get a good job, to live that. When God's got that. Grades are important. I'm not a, I'm not a, I was not a youth minister who said, "Neglect your studies." I get on our students all the time. They'll tell you. I get on them all the time for not studying in college. But God has got more for your child than that. He has given you your child to raise unto Him for His sovereign purposes. But not only that, He's put you here for that. In all of our time are we honoring Him? And our relationship with the world. I know it. This is an election year. It's not going to be a fun year on social media. But is our attitude towards those we disagree with that we know don't have Christ, is our attitude like that of Christ on the cross? Father forgive them. They do not know what they are doing. Or are we fighting battles that Jesus does not intend for us to fight? Because when you and I as the church, as Christians, we are the closest thing this world will see to Jesus Christ before He returns. How are we representing?

Last thought, how does this impact our heart for the lost? We easily have 70,000 students in this city who do not know Jesus Christ. There are 6,500 students from other countries, most of whom do not know Christ. In fact, seven of the top ten countries at A&M, you and I could not go and openly share the gospel without being arrested. That's just students. There's 300,000 people living in the greater Brazos Valley area. Who is one person God has placed in your life for you to spend time this year cultivating a relationship and sharing and showing the gospel to? But not only that, undoubtedly there is possibly someone in this place today who you have never responded to Jesus Christ in repentance and faith. And He says, "Today, today is the day of salvation." Because the same Jesus who is coming back is the same Jesus who has already come, who has gone to the cross, who has taken your guilt, your shame, your sin, has become it on the cross. And today if you will hear Him, He says, "Come. Repent. Trust Me." Going to

church does not save you. Your parent's faith does not save you. Honestly, simply praying a prayer, because it's the thing to do, the prayer's not what saves you. It's you repenting and resting your faith in Christ which we express through prayer. It is that action that Jesus comes and saves you. Is there someone in this room today that you truly do not know Christ? Because this is how it's going to end. This is where it's going. This is where all of history is headed. Because this is who our God is and this is His story. And this is the ending that He's already told us. So, church family, where will we go this year? Do you know who your God is? Are you sure of the ending? And is that dictating every last drop of the way you and I live our lives.

Pray with me.

Father, Jesus, what a joy to know that in a chaotic world You are coming back. No one will stop it. No leader will stop it. No ruler will stop it. Not even the demonic and evil forces that we can't see with our own eyes will stop it. You are coming back. You are sovereign. You, Lord, we just praise You. You are holy, holy, Lord Almighty. So, God, I don't know how each and every one of us need to respond. But Holy Spirit, You do. You are here. You are moving. For those that need to respond, if there is someone who needs to come to know you in repentance and faith today, God, may they respond. For those that need to join the church who need to be plugged in, may they respond. God, for whatever You are stirring in people's hearts, whether it's encouragement, whether it's conviction, may we be faithful to respond to You today.