

Revelation 11:15-19

Palm Sunday is all about the open proclamation and reception of Jesus as the true Messiah and King. It is also about how the religious leaders missed it because of unbelief.

We've been in Revelation and we're at the half-way point.

So how do we know if we're understanding this pastoral letter?

The way to assess our grasp of Revelation is this.... Are we living with a greater appreciation for Christ as the victorious king and are we becoming more outwardly focused?

Matt 21

1 When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied *there* and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION,
'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU,
GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY,
EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.' "

6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats. 8 Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. 9 The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David;
BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD;
Hosanna in the highest!"

Luke 19

41 When He approached *Jerusalem*, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

Rev 11:15-19 is about the Heavenly proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah and King and the consequences for those who don't believe.

I think you'll find some the words of this passage familiar if you are familiar with Handel's Messiah. I thought about asking Dan to lead the Hallelujah Chorus, but it is tricky to pull off with a praise team.

15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,
"The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying,

“We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. 18 And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time *came* for the dead to be judged, and *the time* to reward Your bondservants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.”

19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

v. 15 – This is where things are heading. Why?

Because of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. This text could have been used for Easter or for Ascension Day – May 26th

15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah/Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

These words of v.15 may ring in our ears in musical form are words of Hope. Here in the middle of this letter, we have the clear proclamation of the ultimate victory of Christ. Friends, TAKE HEART at this, if you know Christ.

If you don't know Him, take heed. These are words of HOPE, but they are also very sobering words.

If the ALL the people FULLY understood who was before them during the triumphal entry, they would have been singing this song of chapter 11. Some did but many didn't, and it was still necessary for Christ to accomplish all righteousness through his death and resurrection.

With the seventh trumpet, we might have expected more shock and awe, but here we get praise. When the true king takes up His great power and we see His will done as it is in heaven, there is praise.

PALM SUNDAY is a tiny glimpse of that as the people get a glimpse of Christ as king. In what we call the Triumphal Entry, Jesus openly receives and accepts the praise and honor of the people as Messiah.

This verse is an angelic declaration that introduces the themes that will unfold in the remaining chapters of the book. Like the 7th seal and 7th bowl, this 7th trumpet narrates the end of human history. It tells us what we need to know if we truly want to be on the right side of history – worship the Lord and His Christ.

There are two views of the story: 1 John 4 1) Jesus Christ has come in the flesh 2) every spirit that does not confess Jesus is NOT FROM God; this is the spirit of antichrist, of which you have heard that is coming, and now it is already in the world.

(BTW – while we may think of Revelation when we hear the term antichrist, that term is only used in 1&2 John).

The wording in the past tense indicates the certainty of what will come. It has already happened in the timeline of God. We don't know how the story will unfold with Christ's kingdom being fully and finally established, but we know that it is sure.

Note the use of the singular “kingdom of this world”. No matter how many kingdoms there appear to be from our perspective, in the spiritual reality there is ONE kingdom of this world, and it is the anti-God kingdom ruled by “rulers of this present world” (Eph 6:12). It is the evil spiritual powers of darkness that run this world. THAT WOULD ACTUALLY EXPLAIN A LOT OF THINGS.

We hear about horrors of history or of current headlines and we ask, “How could this happen?”

It could and does happen because the rulers of this world come to steal, kill, and destroy.

The Hallelujah chorus celebrates the victory of the kingdom of Christ over the kingdom of this world. Sadly, many choral society or church choir members who are not believers sing the song that celebrates the destruction of the very kingdom to which they belong. Even while singing the truth they don't admit it or embrace it.

The victory of the kingdom of our Lord is a central theme or motif that runs throughout all of the Bible.

The future victory of God's kingdom is brought into the present as a way of helping us orient our lives NOW.

Given the certain future, how can we live NOW?

We can live as those who value what is eternal

We can live as those who recognize that this life is NOT all there is.

We can live as those who revere and obey the King who has come and who is coming again.

We can live in ways that enable the light of Christ to shine in this world.

One clear exhortation along those lines comes in Phil 2

14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

While Revelation does use 'recapitulation' ,i.e. the same period of time present from different perspectives, the NT has an ultimate linear progression toward the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

"THY Kingdom COME" will have its fulfillment.

The biblical progression of history is not the same as the current cultural mantra of being 'progressive.' Any true "progressive" agenda would include the traits and values of the true kingdom of God, not the man-centered values of our own autonomous identity.

If there is no king, then every man or woman does what is right in his or her own eyes, and they think it is progress. That is NOT PROGRESS. We've seen that play out before (Judges). It is chaos; it devalues life and human flourishing, and it smells like smoke.

v. 17 "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, ... this echoes Revelation 1:4,8 and 4:8. Here it leaves out "who is to come" because His coming is viewed as a current ongoing reality. In Christ, the Lord HAS COME.

From the perspective of those who make this proclamation, it has already happened.

... You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign – FULL STOP!

"God now takes up the rule that He formerly permitted Satan to have in this world." – Beale

v. 18 The double effect of the Second Coming:

There is salvation for those who trust God and His Son, Jesus.

There is doom for those who oppose and deny Him and who "destroy the earth" v. 18.

Believing in God and trusting Him is contrasted with those who are enraged at the rule of God and who destroy the earth.

Perhaps the third "Woe" of 11:14 is this judgment upon mankind and the doom of those who reject Christ.

v. 19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

v. 19: The ark IN THE TEMPLE of God, which is in heaven, is an intensive way of describing the presence of God. The temple and the ark were given to demonstrate the presence of God with His people. The God of the Bible is not aloof and distant. He is a God who has always sought to draw His people near to Him.

It's hard to read about the Ark and the thunder, earthquake and hailstorm without thinking of the Raiders of the Lost Ark. One thing that movie got right was the sense of awe that was afforded the Ark because it represented something Holy – the presence of God.

Before the ark, in the Garden of Eden, God was present with Adam and Eve. He walked and conversed with Adam. The Garden itself was a type of a temple where man and woman made in God's image dwelt in His presence.

Even the seemingly casual mention of God "walking" in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8) is rich with connotations that suggest God's presence in the temple. In Leviticus 26, the Lord promises that he will "walk" among them and be their God (Lev 26:12). In Deuteronomy 23, the Lord commands the Israelites to keep their camp holy because he "walks" in the midst of their camp (Deut 23:14). Beale

The tree of life and the river of life that are found in the Garden of Eden are also present in the longed for New heavenly city – Rev 22. The symbolism of the tree of life and the RIVER OF LIFE in the Garden and the New Jerusalem represents the presence of God.

The river of life flows from the presence of God into the lands of the nations. So too, our mission to the nations must flow from the living water that we find in Christ. It's only as we drink from the living water of Christ that we are enabled to bring the life giving truth to those around us.

Johjn 4:14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

Jn 7:37., "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'

Before the incarnate Christ would take up his power and reign, He laid it aside and humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. He was stricken and smitten for our transgressions. He became thirsty so that we might have the living water.

JESUS OF THE SCARS

**The other gods were strong, but Thou wast weak;
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,
And not a god has wounds, but Thou alone.**

Come to the TABLE

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